

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY

OU\_160316

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



**OSMANIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

Call No. *150/1146P* Accession No. *8383*

Author *Maxwell, W.N.*

Title *Psychological Retrospect of the Great War.*

This book should be returned on or before the date  
last marked below.









A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT  
OF THE GREAT WAR



# A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT OF THE GREAT WAR

BY

W. N. MAXWELL, M.A.

LATE CHAPLAIN 43RD C.C.S. AND TROOPS OF THE  
6TH CORPS

WITH A FOREWORD BY

PROFESSOR JOHN LAIRD, M.A.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, BELFAST



LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD.  
RUSKIN HOUSE, 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C.1

*(All rights reserved)*

*Printed in Great Britain by*  
**UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED, THE GRESHAM PRESS, LONDON AND WOKING**

## FOREWORD

THIS *Retrospect*, although composed in tranquillity, lives in the stress of arms. It is the first-hand record of an acute and candid observer, diligently watching the combatant mind as he found it at the Front, and it has the weight and the freshness of a contemporary document without any of the fever and the prejudice which could not be avoided in the furious times with which it deals. The author is very well equipped in point of psychological knowledge, and he has a singular aptitude for accurate, discerning, sympathetic observation. In a word, he unites an exceptional capacity for psychological enquiry with the opportunity which he shared with so many other public-spirited men. It would be a reproach to our age if it were seriously deficient in its orderly, comprehensive records of this species. Yet these are rare, and I know of none which has forestalled this one.

I venture to commend the book, indeed, to all who are interested in human nature, not merely to those who are (or consider themselves) peculiarly knowledgeable in the science of psychology. Directly, it is true, and in its first intention the book is a psychological monograph, and, as I think, a most competent and valuable one. Psychology, however, is an easy science from the reader's point of view

## 8      A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

if the writer knows how to convey his sense of life as he finds it, and I do not think that anyone will deny that Mr. Maxwell is able to do so. He conveys it, moreover, in its proper proportion, and with an honourable compassion. No one knows better what need not be dwelt upon if it has to be said, or how to avoid sentimentalism and the pose of it while acknowledging the efficacy and the honesty of sentiment. He has an eye, too, for the wider issues of his subject—for the soldier's civilian interests and parentage and for the social problems incident to his return.

I might enlarge on these topics very readily, but I have said enough, I think, to make my meaning plain, and it is my business to point out some of the major respects in which this monograph is of service to the science of psychology. As a sage has observed, "it is no easy matter to give a good reason for writing at all, but prefaces are wholly inexcusable." Perhaps, however, I may palliate the offence by explaining how it came to be committed. I became acquainted with this work as an examiner; I was soon its warm admirer. The same thing happened to others whose opinion I value; and we decided, as a matter of course, that Mr. Maxwell's old University honoured itself when it gave him the modest distinction which he asked. But this was not enough. We were also convinced, and firmly, that the book had permanent and most considerable psychological worth, and so that it deserved and would receive a wide recognition. It had to be published, in short, for the sake of the science. I have to admit, of course, that the sceptic, if he chooses, may declare this testimony suspect from that most unusual of causes—the brimming enthusiasm of an examiner;



and that I cannot confute him for the moment. All that I can say—at present—is that I think I have a proper sense of my responsibility in making these statements.

Mr. Maxwell follows Dr. McDougall in his general conception of psychological method. He believes, that is to say, that psychology deals, broadly speaking, with human behaviour, looking for evidence of conscious reactions where this is available ; and, if not, dealing still with behaviour. This, as I gather, is what Dr. McDougall meant by his doctrine before he could suspect that his definition might fall into the clutches of Mr. Watson and his friends. More in detail, Mr. Maxwell sets himself to investigate the adequacy of theories such as Dr. McDougall's when put to a severe but illuminating test in this gigantic experiment of the war. His conclusion, taken broadly, is in favour of these interpretations of human nature. The war, he thinks, revealed them in a new direction ; and this he is concerned to describe.

This general conclusion, as everyone knows, agrees with the best opinion that we have, and Mr. Maxwell's discussion gives a strong independent corroboration of the general thesis which the late Dr. Rivers expressed in the following words : " Out of the complex mass of experience which has emerged and is capable of study and analysis, nothing is more certain than the general confirmation of the conclusions to which students were already being led. The war has shown that human behaviour in the mass is determined by sentiments resting upon instinctive trends and traditions founded upon such trends." It is plain, however, that the value of all such confirmations

## 10 A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

chiefly depends upon the precision and the comprehensiveness of the enquiry, together with the acuteness and the candour of the investigator. I should like to repeat, then, that the evidence in this monograph is perspicuous, first-hand, and detailed ; and I think psychologists will agree with me when I say that these observations add where they confirm, and that they should be marked where they dissent.

It is impossible to mention the name of Dr. McDougall or of Dr. Rivers without recognising the benefits of the present happy alliance between medicine and psychology, and therefore I should not be misunderstood when I say that there are advantages in the circumstance that Mr. Maxwell is *not* a doctor. There are idols of the cave, and, as I venture to think, a tendency to exaggerate the general instructiveness of 'shell-shock' cases. I hasten to add, however, that if these remarks are partisan, my author rebukes me himself. As the reader will perceive, Mr. Maxwell is keenly aware of the value of clinical evidence, and has no disposition to neglect it.

The free 'behaviourism' of Mr. Maxwell's method permits and, indeed, encourages him to deal with 'unconsciousness' as well as with introspective testimony, and he has an adequate sense of the "minuter propensities of the mind," as one of Miss Austen's heroines called them. Nevertheless, I am glad he is not a psycho-analyst. In saying so, I have to confess, once again, that I am straying beyond my record without the smallest encouragement from my author. There is nothing of this attitude in his seventh chapter ; indeed, there is something of the opposite. Yet I find a certain private satisfac-

tion. Even if psycho-analysis is destined, at some future date, to shoulder the whole burden of psychological truth, it tends to become a tyrannous, dwarfing Colossus at the present stage of our knowledge ; and too many of its exponents succumb to the seductions of a speculative fantasia. " It all resolved itself in him as I say, and it is for you to prove that it didn't." It is comforting to know that Mr. Maxwell has other ideas of the burden of proof.

JOHN LAIRD.



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Two principal motives have been operative in the preparation of this book. It is an attempt to give an answer to the questions which many men have asked themselves regarding their reactions to the environment of war. Sometimes such things were discussed in billets, and even since the war ended, former comrades in arms, in reviving old memories, have often ended by saying, "I don't know how we did it." A further purpose has been to show the late war as a great educational experience, the results of which are still being felt. Whether it was a good or bad type of education, and whether, even at its best, it was worth the price paid for it, is a matter which the reader of this book must decide for himself.

I wish to express my thanks for the assistance received from the various works to which reference is made throughout the book. I must, however, make grateful acknowledgment especially to the proprietors of the *British Medical Journal* for the permission they so cordially extended to me to make use of articles in their publication, and to Dr. William Brown, of Harley Street, for allowing me to use and to quote from his contributions to this publication,

## 14      A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

as well as for other assistance in the way of information he has afforded me.

My thanks are also due in an outstanding way and are extended to Professor Laird, of the Queen's University, Belfast, for the help I have received from him in the way of advice and in the reading of the proofs of this book, as well as for the Foreword in which he introduces this work to the public.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD . . . . .	7
PREFACE . . . . .	13
I. DATA AND FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTIONS . . . . .	17
II. THE WAR IMPULSE . . . . .	43
III. DANGER INSTINCTS AT THE FRONT . . . . .	60
IV. DANGER INSTINCTS AT THE FRONT— <i>continued</i> . . . . .	83
V. SENTIMENT AT THE FRONT . . . . .	95
VI. COURAGE . . . . .	115
VII. THE UNCONSCIOUS MIND . . . . .	133
VIII. THE INFLUENCE OF GROUP LIFE UPON THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE ARMY . . . . .	157
IX. CONCLUSION . . . . .	179
INDEX . . . . .	189





# A Psychological Retrospect of the Great War

## I

### DATA AND FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTIONS

## I

It would have been inexplicable had the recent Great War, with its widespread incidence and significance, produced no change in the characters of those who were involved in it. People found themselves in an environment such as they had never previously experienced, and their reactions towards it brought to light characteristics of which they had hitherto been unconscious, or which at any rate had never been displayed in exactly the same way. Lovers of peace found themselves answering the call to arms, stirred by an impulse which they neither tried to explain nor sought to suppress. Anti-social Ishmaels found themselves co-operating with others for a common end, despite their former unrestrained egoism. The *Student in Arms*, who proves himself to be no mean student of men, tells of those who in pre-war days "would not fit into any respectable niche in our social edifice. They were incurably disreputable, always in scrapes, always impecunious,

## 18      A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

always improvident." Yet in war they seemed to be different men, "for if they lived amiss, they died gloriously, with a smile for the pain and the dread of it." Even a superficial observation of the changes wrought in personality during the war years has suggested to many either that there are a number of strange potentialities having their abode in man, or that the environment has a disquieting creative power, by which qualities not formerly possessed are shown in behaviour. It has been a common experience to hear people say "the war has changed him greatly." In some cases men seem to have developed, in others to have retrograded. People's interests have altered, and many a man has sought his life-work along a path altogether different from that of his pre-war occupation, or has gone back to the old path with reluctance and in some cases with actual abhorrence.

Here are facts of experience which seem to point back to the World War as their proximate cause and explanation. What their ultimate cause and explanation may be is a matter for psychological investigation. During the war years the veneer of civilisation was torn away by the rough hand of circumstance, and primitive impulses and dispositions were shown to be present in astonishing strength. Interests were few in number among those on active service at the Front, but they were marvellously intense. As a close observer of men and manners said on one occasion, "Everything out here is intensified, and both physically and morally men are either made or marred by the conditions."

Further, certain social evils which have supervened upon the war have been popularly attributed to its

effect upon personality. The prevalent social unrest, the growth of a spirit of irresponsibility, the 'crime wave' which has assumed international dimensions, have popularly been considered to be consequences of the war. Whether this conclusion be true or not, the facts upon which it is based furnish data for psychological investigation. Some may deny that there is any nexus between the war and such facts of present-day life. Yet the fact remains that men whose activities were disciplined for more than four years in pursuit of a specific end presented by the World War have in many cases found themselves unfit for the disciplines of peace. It is for psychology to attempt an explanation of those self-assertive and anti-social tendencies which, although previously present in organised society, have become so much more intense since the Great War ended.

A further group of data is furnished in those letters written by soldiers on active service which reveal psychological states such as no censorship could completely hide. Men wrote to the home circle in terms which idealised conditions and voiced hopes such as the experience of the moment scarcely warranted. These letters gave to many people the idea that warfare under modern conditions was a blend of *café chantant* and picnic. In some cases true affection was the impulse that sought to hide the grim reality from loving eyes; in others, it may have been a case of the wish being father to the thought, a kind of consolatory life-lie that sought to suppress painful emotion in the interests of the life which had to be endured. In some cases one could detect the note of self-importance in letters which were presented for censoring, as when a

## 20      A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

soldier described the part he had played in an entirely imaginary battle, while another, billeted at the time in a hut near which no shell had fallen for weeks, wrote as from a 'dug-out' forty feet below ground level, and described the fierce bombardment to which his shelter was being subjected. One had, also, at times the experience of censoring letters in which the writer tried to show his own importance in occupying some prominent place in a definite military movement. "We embarked at such and such a place at such an hour and on such a day, and arrived at some other place at such an hour and on such a day" (supplying names and dates): "I arrived in the front line at eleven o'clock on the night of such a day, and was chosen for sentry duty, going on guard in the front line at one o'clock in the morning." In one such case that came under my notice there could have been no intention to give away valuable military information. It seemed to be entirely due to the play of some instinct of self-assertion or self-display. Later we shall have to deal with such data when we are considering suppressed instincts in war.

It is from the days of active service at the Front that one gathers the richest crop of lessons for psychological theory. One's own war experiences, and the memory of conversations with brother officers and men of all ranks, throw a unique light upon the impulses that lay behind action, the dispositions revealed in reaction towards special conditions, the instincts and emotions which were most commonly aroused, and those which were most commonly suppressed. In the same category we may include those very human documents, cameos

of thought and feeling, which have been furnished by men on active service—books like Donald Hankey's *Student in Arms* or Patrick McGill's *Red Horizon*.

## II

In addition to the questions raised by an investigation of such facts of experience as have been mentioned, a suggestive field of enquiry has been opened through contact with various types of war neurosis. Investigation of the abundant cases of so-called 'shell shock' has raised in an acute form questions regarding the unconscious processes of mind, and their relation to behaviour. Hysterical manifestations, accompanied by loss of memory and paralysis of certain voluntary muscles, have seemed in many cases to confirm the Freudian theory of repressed emotional tendencies and of emotional 'complexes' which occupy, in the region of the unconscious, much the same position as is held by the sentiments on the conscious level of mental life. We are, however, in a very obscure and difficult region when we are investigating the 'unconscious,' and it behoves us to be cautious in our conclusions. At the same time, certain features in the hinterland of the unconscious may be discovered, rising above the welter of speculation like mountain peaks seen above the mists that cling around them.

"In hysteria," writes Dr. William Brown, of Oxford, "we have very obviously a case of dissociation; certain parts of the mind, certain sensations, certain powers of movement, certain memories, are lost to the main consciousness, but

## 22      A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

still exist somewhere or other, in some form or other, and can be restored under appropriate conditions.”<sup>1</sup> It was the fundamental position of Janet that personality is a synthesis of mental elements which are held together by a unifying power which is one of the fundamental properties of mind. He found, however, that in hysteric subjects there was some interference within the unity of personality, whereby some psycho-physical functions became dissociated from the main current of mental life. The ability to use certain voluntary muscles, and the memory of certain events and experiences were found to be lost to the conscious personality, though not completely annihilated, since they could be restored by hypnosis and suggestion.

Janet, however, did not succeed in discovering why the dissociation occurs. It was left to the genius of Dr. Freud, of Vienna, to make this discovery. Approaching the subject in company with his colleague Breuer, he found that where there was loss of memory such memories were always of an emotional type, and that the symptoms of hysteria disappeared when these memories could be restored in association with their original emotional content. Thereupon he formulated his theory that hysteric dissociation is due to a preliminary mental conflict and the repression of one of the conflicting elements. The repressed element, however, does not suffer annihilation. The conflict is continued upon the unconscious level, forming a complex which reacts upon the conscious mind and its functioning. Psychic energy is bound up in the emotion which is repressed, and may find an outlet either in such physical symp-

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology and Psychotherapy*, p. 2.

toms as are seen in hysterical dissociation of a gross type, or in what have been called 'anxiety states.'

With much of this there is a pretty general agreement among those who have had personal experience of the psychoneuroses of war. But when Freud makes the emotional conflict and the repressed emotion sexual, many of them part company with him. They find that the theory does not conform to the facts. "Lack of evidence," says Dr. Millais Culpin, "prevents the application of the theory of the sexual cause of psychoneuroses."<sup>1</sup> He states further that out of four hundred and fifteen cases brought under his personal attention, "in one case alone were the symptoms traced back to a sexual foundation."<sup>2</sup> Even Jung, Freud's distinguished disciple, casts doubt upon the universally sexual character of some of the psychoneuroses. He considers it to be conceivable that one instinct may disguise itself under the form of another, and sums up an argument on the Psychology of the Unconscious Processes in these words: "The theory of sexuality, although one-sided, is absolutely right up to a certain point. It would, therefore, be just as false to repudiate it as to accept it as universally valid."<sup>3</sup>

Jung's own position differs fundamentally from his teacher's in two respects. Whereas Freud taught that the psychic energy that is converted into hysteric symptoms is sexual in character, Jung holds that "From a broader standpoint libido can be understood as vital energy in general, or as Bergson's *élan vital*."<sup>4</sup> And whereas Freud finds the cause

<sup>1</sup> *Psychoneuroses of War and Peace*, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> *Analytical Psychology*, p. 381.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 231.

of a neurosis in the infantile past, and some sexual conflict which occurred then, Jung finds it in the present. "Whenever the libido, in the process of adaptation, meets an obstacle, an accumulation takes place which normally gives rise to an increased effort to overcome the obstacle. But if the obstacle seems to be insurmountable, and the individual renounces the overcoming of it, the stored up libido makes a regression. In place of being employed in the increased effort, the libido now gives up the present task and returns to a former and more primitive way of adaptation."<sup>1</sup>

Both Freud and Jung furnish an advance on Janet's theory of dissociation; the former through his account of the emotional conflict and repression that lie at the basis of all hysterical manifestations; the latter by his conception of the libido as a striving for expression on the part of unconscious tendencies of every kind. Examples of such emotional tendencies operative in the psychoneuroses of war were fear, anger, self-abasement, self-assertion, and disgust, which, driven underground and prevented from expressing themselves in a due manner, were converted through the strain of war or some specific shock into gross physical hysteria, or some form of 'anxiety state.'

### III

Former definitions of psychology made it "the science of mind," or an "examination, description, classification, and explanation of states of consciousness, as such." It is obvious, however, that

<sup>1</sup> *Analytical Psychology*, p. 231.



such definitions need to be greatly altered, if psychology is to contribute much that is explanatory of the experiences to which reference has been made. The war, though it may not have created, has at any rate emphasised the necessity for a new point of view, and has profoundly modified and enlarged our conception of the scope of psychology. Psychology is seen no longer merely as the science of mind, chiefly engaged upon an examination of consciousness by the method of introspection. It has come to be recognised as the science of behaviour in general, and its subject matter no longer consists merely in what is projected upon the screen of consciousness. Behind consciousness there are seen great instinctive tendencies and unconscious processes which furnish the motives for a great deal of human conduct, if not for all of it. Moreover, it is no longer possible for a thoroughgoing psychology to examine the individual mind out of its social setting, since it has become clear that the social environment moulds and fashions the individual mind into what it becomes. This is the fundamental conception from which the present enquiry proceeds, and which an attempt will be made to maintain in subsequent pages. It is the point of view which is set forth by Professor William McDougall, who defines psychology as "the positive science of the behaviour of living things."<sup>1</sup>

It seems clear that some such definition is required, if one is to deal adequately with the facts and experiences which form the material of an enquiry into the lessons of the war for Psychological Theory. For the greater part, our data are con-

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, p. 19.

cerned with behaviour and conduct, and it is only by a close study of such behaviour that we can infer that others possess a consciousness similar to our own. It is, indeed, with our own behaviour that we begin, when we try to describe and to explain our own conscious states. We set out from *what* we have done, when we are trying to explain *why* we have done it.

It seems necessary at this point to distinguish the position of moderate 'behaviourism,' which is adopted in the present enquiry from that held by Mr. J. B. Watson and the American school of 'behaviourists.' The latter close out all interest in consciousness, and confine themselves to the mechanical and external facts of behaviour. They deal with muscular reactions and bodily habits, and with the activities of the glandular systems and the various facts of blood circulation. This is all very good so far as it goes : and American 'behaviourism' has made valuable contribution to our knowledge of the mechanical side of human activity. But such a point of view is scarcely distinguishable from that of physiology. It is, moreover, objectionable on the ground that it is blind to one half the facts, since the data of consciousness are quite as real as the functioning of glands and the movements of muscles and limbs. A science that is wilfully blind to one half of the facts presented to it must fail to practise a true method of induction, and must reach many conclusions which are capable of modification, or even rejection, through evidence supplied by the facts that are disregarded.

Better is the position taken up by Professor McDougall when he regards behaviour as involving

not only physical but psychical elements. To approach our subject from the standpoint of this conception involves certain paramount advantages. It lifts psychology into position as one of the positive, empirical sciences. It links the most rudimentary form of life with the highest, thus satisfying the requirements of modern evolutionary theory. Moreover, such a view does not commit one to any metaphysical theory as to the nature of the ultimate reality to which our conscious states are conjoined and by which they are related to one another as a unity. It may be 'spiritual' or it may be 'material,' and the relation between various states of conscious activity purely mechanical. So far as a 'science of behaviour' is concerned, we have nothing to do with ultimate reality, but only with things as they are in experience.

Further, if we were to confine psychology within the narrow field of behaviour surveyed by American 'behaviourists' of the school of Mr. Watson, we should be as much prohibited from exploring the Unconscious as we would were we to confine the scope of our subject to states of consciousness. It will be found necessary to dip beneath the level of consciousness for an explanation of certain elements in behaviour, since, as will be shown, it may be and frequently is, under war conditions, profoundly modified by the presence of mental processes of which we are unconscious.

Moreover, by studying consciousness merely as if it consisted in states of mind, there is an inevitable tendency to treat mind and the various processes of mind in a somewhat abstract way. From this it has followed that thought and reason have been

isolated from other mental functions, and have been treated as the sole motives of action. Mr. Morris Ginsberg affirms that this is "a fallacy due to the tendency to break up the personality into distinct units and the failure to regard the self-conscious personality as a whole."<sup>1</sup> "The energy involved," he says, "is the energy of the total self, which no doubt takes various forms and finds for itself different channels, according as the activity is impulsive or voluntary, but which remains essentially one."<sup>2</sup> Even Professor McDougall, who attacks 'intellectualism' so warmly, emphasises the presence of thought in the very crudest impulses, when he defines 'behaviour' as 'purposive effort,' since purpose involves some idea of an end to be achieved, and of adaptations which are more than mechanical in striving for that end. "The manifestation of purpose, or the striving to achieve an end, is the mark of behaviour."<sup>3</sup> At the same time, he shows that we are not to take the idea of an end as the sole, or even the chief, motive for action. Rather our action springs from a sort of tension, a sense of want, which persists until the whole train of activity has been satisfied. Taking, then, behaviour in this sense as the empirical datum of psychology, the attempt is made to show the human organism in dynamic relation to its environment, striving for ever for the fullest expression of its vital energy.

#### IV

A further fundamental position has to be accepted when we are brought face to face with any specific

<sup>1</sup> The *Psychology of Society*, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> *Psychology*, p. 20.

fact of behaviour. Why does a man in the presence of variety of stimuli, the totality of which makes up his environment, act in this way, rather than in that? Why does a man feel a thrill of fear in the presence of danger? Why is he prompted to run away—or it may be to face the danger at whatever cost? Why does some seemingly pacific individual become imbued with the war spirit, leaving home and ease and plunging into a welter of discomfort and danger, without stopping to count the cost, or, having counted the cost, why does he still do it? Why does a soldier with some definite object of work before him go through danger without a tremor, and, the duty completed, why does he run like a hare from dangers far less terrible?

The answer to questions like these brings us to the conception of innate tendencies to thought and action which form the native constitution of the mind. "There is," writes Professor McDougall, "in the structure of any mind something that endures as the ground of the potentiality of thinking of each specific object which can be thought of by that mind. . . . Perhaps the best term by which to describe it is mental disposition: for it is that which disposes or enables the mind to think of or to exercise its faculties, cognitive, affective, and conative, upon a corresponding object."<sup>1</sup> The mind is no longer regarded as a mere *tabula rasa*, giving out only what it receives from without, and functioning only through the reproduction and association of ideas in pursuit of a dual end consisting in the promotion of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. We find that in all human beings there are certain tensions, innate, congenital dispositions

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, p. 82.

of a specific character, which are the inner conditions of response to certain stimuli. Even when the stimulus is absent, the disposition to act is there, ready to function at a moment's notice. One is walking along a road, when a shell screams overhead without warning and explodes with violence. Before thought can assume command of the situation there is an instant response. At once there comes a tremor of fear, a muscular reaction of some kind; the heart seems to stop beating and a moment after races. It is not an example of reflex action, either simple or compound, for reflex action is local, whereas in this case there is an instant response of the whole organism. In a moment an act of judgment may inhibit the fear and steady the heart beat, but it is clear that a tension, a disposition to behave in the way indicated, has been present, and has only needed the suitable occasion in order to reveal itself. The mental conditions antecedent to behaviour are not static: there is potential behaviour before actual behaviour takes place. The conditions "do literally *tend* to realise themselves, the organism is truly *disposed* to act in such and such a way." <sup>1</sup>

Approaching the question of these innate dispositions to action from the standpoint of a physiologist, Dr. Charles Platt describes them in his *Psychology of Thought and Feeling* as "tendencies to form certain brain patterns more easily than others." That is to say, a mental disposition consists of the tendency by which the stream of nervous energy is attracted into and flows along certain channels more easily than others. Some of these

<sup>1</sup> S. S. Brierley, *Introduction to Psychology*, p. 47.

brain patterns are congenital, and hold dispositions that are instinctive because of their value for the existence of the race ; others have been acquired through experience, which has linked together more primary groups of neurons into larger systems by means of ' association fibres.' " All the diversities of life," Dr. Platt insists, " trace back to the inherited or acquired brain patterns, and these, too, in their elaboration by association constitute the whole of psychology. Through all life the pattern remains, like a set-piece of fireworks, awaiting the spark—not always of course in consciousness, but ready always when the appropriate stimulus arrives." <sup>1</sup>

Such a conception of our innate dispositions helps us to form an idea of the relationship between emotion and our instinctive or non-reflective reactions towards stimuli of a specific kind. The recent war has shown the immediacy with which certain primary emotions, such as fear or anger, spring to life in response to specific stimuli which have excited them. It has also shown that no amount of experience can altogether check the immediate record of such emotions upon the repetition of the conditions which have evoked them previously. A man knows that he is comparatively or even altogether safe in some dug-out, yet when a shell explodes in its vicinity he will feel the thrill of fear and the shrinking into himself which accompanies it. Dr. Platt explains the immediacy and constancy of such emotional and instinctive reactions by this conception of a disposition, innate and congenital, by the operation of which nervous force seeks to travel along a channel which has been preferred and established because

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology of Thought and Feeling*, p. 7.

## 32 A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

of its value for the race. He traces the primary emotions back to their source in the sympathetic nervous system, which controls the various glandular and involuntary activities of the body. When danger arises, or an occasion for active attack or defence against an enemy occurs, the stimulus is not only carried along the cerebro-spinal system to the brain, but a portion of the nerve current traverses the sympathetic system, acting upon certain glands which control the veins and arteries in preparation for the specific action towards which the preferred tendency disposes us. Immediately there is the awareness of some change in bodily sensation and feeling-tone. It is the consciousness of this change which constitutes the psychological explanation of the emotion.

From the description which has just been given of the physiological factors which enter into such simple emotional reactions as fear or anger, it might seem that such reactions are mechanical. Certainly there are strong resemblances between instinctive tendencies and those which are merely tendencies to reflex action : but there are also great differences. In the former case the process is psychical, even though it involves certain mechanical elements. It is an immediate fact of consciousness, and involves the three aspects under which every psychical process is known. There is a perceptual act, followed immediately by an emotional experience of specific quality and an immediate striving towards the fulfilment of some bodily condition. If we are to allow the terms 'instinct' or 'instinctive action' to remain in reference to the disposition involved, it must be understood that it is not merely a dis-



position towards reflex action. Reflex action is more rigid in its operation than instinct. It lacks the power of being modified which characterises the latter. Probably on the first operation of an instinctive tendency there is a large amount of unconsciousness involved, a fact which enables Professor James to say that an instinct is "a tendency to act in such a way as to produce certain ends, without foresight of those ends, and without previous education in the performance of the action." There seems no reason, however, even in its earliest operation, for defining it as a mere tendency to act. It involves the entire psychical experience in which every fact of consciousness is expressed. It has in some ways—in its immediacy, for example—a close resemblance to the disposition that underlies reflex action, but there seem to be further dispositions involved in the case of instinctive action. Reflex action is entirely unconscious, it is purely mechanical, and we know nothing about it until the whole process from stimulus to reaction has been completed. It is, moreover, practically, if not utterly, impossible to control or direct or modify in any way such reactions. Criticising Professor Karl Groos, who says that "the idea of consciousness must be rigidly excluded from any definition of instinct which is to be of practical utility," Professor McDougall says, "I would reverse Professor Groos's dictum, and would say that any definition of instinctive action that does not insist upon its psychical aspect is useless for practical purposes, and worse than useless, because misleading. For if we neglect the psychical aspect of instinctive processes, it is impossible to understand the part played by instincts in the

development of the human mind and in the determination of the conduct of individuals and societies ; and it is the fundamental and all-pervading character of their influence upon the social life of mankind which alone gives the consideration of instincts its great practical importance.”<sup>1</sup>

An important consideration arises from the conception of ‘brain patterns,’ linked together into larger systems through the development of ‘association fibres.’ It becomes clear that, subsequent to experience, some of our fundamental brain patterns will no longer be in isolation, having been linked together to form larger patterns. One consequence of this would seem to be that in adult man there is very little that is pure instinct. There is the innate disposition or tendency to form certain patterns rather than others under specific stimuli, but under the pressure of experience there seems to be a certain fusion of pattern. Under the primitive conditions of warfare one would expect to find the presence of pure instinct in abundance. Yet even under such conditions there seems to be a kind of fusion, rather than an aggregation of simple instinctive tendencies. For example, under such conditions there seems to be a fusion of the self-assertive instinct and the instinct of pugnacity, so that it is impossible to say which is primary in that war spirit which sweeps whole countries, or is seen in the ferocity of attacking troops : and in the emotion of fear we seem to find, not the affective aspect of a pure instinctive tendency, but rather of one that is a compound of the instinct of self-abasement and of flight or concealment. As Professor

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 30 (footnote).

Hobhouse has said, "Elements of true instinct remain, but in the state of dilapidation."<sup>1</sup>

The matter is further complicated by the fact that we are dealing with those who have arrived at self-consciousness and are reflective, so that they will tend to inhibit certain dispositions, or to repress them from declaring their presence in the form which they would otherwise take in conscious behaviour. Over and over again men on active service had to hold themselves back from following out a train of thought about the things they thought and heard. "Better not think of such things," was the advice of a soldier of ripe experience to a younger man. And yet there was reflection, sometimes repressed, sometimes active, but always profoundly modifying instinctive processes. This modifying character of reflective self-consciousness will meet us again, when we try to explain some of the cases of so-called 'shell shock.'

Another conception which shows how instinct becomes modified under the pressure of experience has been maintained by Professor McDougall. He has noted that instinctive action, after it has been evoked by its specific stimulus, does not always reveal itself in precisely the same kind of behaviour on subsequent occasions. Both on its perceptual and on its conative side there appear modifications due to experience. New perceptual arcs are formed along which the stream of nervous energy flows in response to external stimuli. The emotional aspect of the instinct remains constant, he teaches, but both the perceptual inlet and the resultant behaviour may be modified through experience. "The in-

<sup>1</sup> *Mind in Evolution*, p. 105.

instinctive reactions become capable of being initiated, not only by the perception of objects of the kind which directly excite the innate disposition, the natural or native excitants of the instinct, but also by ideas of such objects, and by perceptions, and by ideas of objects of other kinds.”<sup>1</sup>

So much with reference to the modification of the afferent side of instinctive process. Regarding the modification of the efferent side of such a process he writes, “The bodily movements in which the instinct finds expression may be modified and complicated to an indefinitely great degree.”<sup>2</sup> The view I shall try to maintain in this thesis is not altogether that propounded by Professor McDougall in his various works regarding the instincts as the sole motive of behaviour. It seems to me that he overlooks the meaning of all this modification of instinctive process. Because of their value for life these instincts are formed, and because of their value for life these instincts are modified. There is a disposition, a fundamental feeling of tension, which forms the core of every instinct, and it is this which is the determinant of our interest, and therefore of our behaviour. Instinct may seem to carry us on until some process has been completed and satisfaction is reached, but it is really something more fundamental that does so, something that has given the instinct its innate characteristics, and which modifies it through experience in whatever way it is changed. Not instinct, but the urge of life, the primal *élan vital*, carries us on to an end which is more or less clearly seen.

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## V

Of profound significance to any study of concrete psychological fact is the relation between the individual and the society of which he forms a part. Only in relation to his social *milieu* can the individual be understood. The fact is that no one is ever found in isolation from some group, and from his relation to that group each of us derives something of his mental life and his consequent behaviour. In addition to the innate dispositions which lie at the root of human activity, we find the existence of other principles which arise in collective life. It matters not whether the group is highly organised or not organised at all, every individual entering it is to a greater or lesser degree swayed by what McDougall calls "the basal principles of all collective life," namely, sympathetic contagion, mass suggestion, and imitation. Under the sway of these dispositions the war spirit was developed and the peace-loving civilian turned into a soldier, in the latter case primarily under the sway of the imitative impulse.

Of recent years there has arisen the question of the existence of some psychical social entity which can be called a 'group mind.' It seems to me that such a discussion hinges entirely on a matter of words. It may be possible to define 'mind' in such a way as to admit the possibility of a group mind. I do not feel disposed to plunge into any definition of mind beyond saying that it is the totality of our psycho-physical dispositions in inter-relation. There is undoubtedly a whole composed of individual minds in inter-relation, a collective, but by no means

an individual unity. There is no mental process which lies outside the minds of those who compose any particular group. I feel, therefore, that I am unable to follow Professor McDougall in his view that there is a group mind which differs from, and is often superior to, the individual mind. Writing of the collective action of a well-organised group, he says, "The whole is raised above the level of its average member, and even by reason of the exaltation of emotion and organised co-operation in deliberation, above that of its highest members."<sup>1</sup> His argument is that "since the social aggregate has a collective mental life which is not merely the sum of the mental lives of its units, it may be contended that a society has not only a collective social life, but also has a collective mind, or, as some prefer to say, a collective soul."<sup>2</sup>

Any complete analysis and criticism of those theories which embody the idea of a group as a substantial unity transcending the individual mind is impossible here. It may, however, be noted that such theories seem to fall within one or other of two main classes, according as they gravitate towards the idea of a collective consciousness which is a kind of fusion of individual mental processes, or towards that of the inherently social character of the content of the individual mind. With both types of theory the social mind is more or less openly declared to constitute a definite collective consciousness.

To the former group belongs such a writer as Espinas, who in his work on *Animal Societies* develops the idea that there must be a collective consciousness, since no self is really completely, or indeed, in any

<sup>1</sup> *The Group Mind*, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

respect, cut off from another. By means of signs the consciousness of one mind—its thoughts, emotions, and impulses—passes readily to another, and passes the more readily, and with the greater intensity, in proportion to the largeness of the group in which the individual is found. All that remains of the individual self, when such processes have been communicated, is a system of instinctive tendencies and organism, which, being racial in character, do not absolutely differentiate or separate one individual from another.

It has been pointed out by Mr. Morris Ginsberg in his *Psychology of Society*, that such a view rests upon a confusion between mental process, or the act of experiencing, and mental content, or the thing experienced.<sup>1</sup> Mental process is and can be nothing except an individual thing. Contents, on the other hand, not being structurally part of the mind, may pass over into other minds through the individual processes of those minds. Any fusion that takes place, therefore, within a group in respect of thought or emotion or impulse is a fusion of content, and not of process.

The second type of theory is that which owes its origin to Hegel and has been worked out in the political philosophy of German Idealism. Writing from this point of view, Mr. E. Barker<sup>2</sup> says: "Already at birth the child is what he is in virtue of communities: he has something of the family character, something of the national character, something of the civilised character which comes from human society. As he grows the community in which he

<sup>1</sup> *The Psychology of Society*, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> *Political Thought in England*, from *Herbert Spencer*, pp. 62-4.

lives pours itself into his being in the language he learns and the social atmosphere he breathes, so that the content of his being implies in its every fibre relations of community." There is much truth in this statement up to a certain point, but that point is passed, I feel, when he concludes that "there is a nation's soul, self-conscious in its citizens, and that to each citizen this living soul assigns his field of accomplishment." Such a view tends to the belittlement, and even to the eventual destruction, of individuality, with consequences which were sufficiently well emphasised in the German attitude of mind that was displayed in the Great War, and, indeed, in the entire organisation of the Imperial German State.

The view embodied by Professor McDougall in his work on *The Group Mind* differs from both these theories, but seems to have more affinity with the latter than the former, even though he repudiates the idea of any 'collective consciousness.' But the argument which he uses against the latter theory can be turned with equal force against his own thesis of a 'group mind' as a system of organised mental forces transcending and moulding individual minds. That argument is that "the conception is a hypothesis which can only be justified by showing that it affords explanation of social phenomena which in its absence remain inexplicable."<sup>1</sup> In any organised group, such as an army on active service, there is no question that the individual owes much to the fact that he is a unit in such a group. But no other explanation of the operation of new dispositions and new forms of behaviour seems to be

<sup>1</sup> *The Group Mind*, p. 38.



required beyond the fact that every mind is influenced by every kind of environment. In a disciplined force the group of which a man is a unit and the individuals with whom he is in inter-relation form a very different environment from that in which he would find himself were he alone, or were his life a reaction towards some other grouping of individuals in inter-relation. As Dr. R. M. MacIver says, "Every man's environment consists of his fellow-men and the world of his fellow-men. His actions and thoughts must therefore, every one of them, be in some kind and degree social phenomena." <sup>1</sup> The recruit falls heir to a body of traditions which have grown up within the group he enters, and these traditions mould him and control his actions in a truly wonderful way. They are, however, only a part of his environment, and no tradition will have the slightest influence upon any individual mind, or upon the behaviour of any individual, unless there be present a disposition to seize upon it.

Further, in any highly organised group, such as an army or a battalion, there grows up in the individual mind a sentiment of *esprit de corps*, an emotional system organised around the idea of the group as a whole. The individual soldier feels that he himself is being praised when his unit is praised, and disgraced when any disgrace falls upon it or upon any of its members. He boasts of its exploits and draws a veil over or tries to explain away its failures. A man's army unit is, indeed, only an extension of himself, and his sentiment for it, his *esprit de corps*, is merely an extension of his self-regarding sentiment.

<sup>1</sup> *Community*, p. 5.

The fact that every good soldier is in possession of these two things, a body of traditions and a sentiment of *esprit de corps*, gives to his group an appearance of unity. It is not, however, a substantial unity. There is a unity of content, but no such unity of process and structure as we require before we can speak of mind. The traditions to which reference has been made exist nowhere save in the minds of the individuals who fall heir to them. They have to be, as one writer has truly said, "sustained and re-interpreted by individuals." If every individual who composed an army or a regiment were destroyed and every scrap of its traditions wiped out, the latter could never be revived by any process within the ranks of the new army that took the place of the old. A new body of tradition would grow up, which might make the life of the new force utterly unlike what that of the old had been. And every new recruit would be compelled to re-interpret and absorb these traditions within his own mental life. The tradition under which the individual mind is brought may certainly be greater than the creative capacity of that mind, but if there is not already a pre-formed disposition towards its acceptance, it will be impossible to get it organised within the mental life of the individual, and it will be impossible for it to survive as a controlling force and influence over the behaviour of the group as a whole. There were men in the Army upon whom all sentiments of *esprit de corps*, and the great traditions of their unit had little, if any, effect, because they lacked the disposition to formulate the former and to respond to the latter.

## II

### THE WAR IMPULSE

Now all the youth of Britain are on fire,  
And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies :  
Now thrive the armourers, and honour's thought  
Reigns solely in the breast of every man.

THESE words supply a picture of Britain during the early days of the late war. There had been, as many thought, a more than sufficient display of 'silken dalliance,' but at the call to arms it seemed to vanish. Life had been non-exciting, humdrum, easygoing. No one believed in threats of war, except those who belonged to a very narrow circle, of which the chief interests were military. The spirit of war in the case of a non-military people, commercial, comfort-loving, and, as some thought, decadent, needs explanation. Ideals have sometimes been mentioned as furnishing the predominant motive whereby the entire nation was swept forward to war—ideals of righteousness and freedom and decency which stirred the people to moral indignation. But even if this be true, it does not explain why the ideals pointed in the direction of the battlefield, and why the moral indignation took the particular form it did. The ideal might have been satisfied by a dignified protest against the invasion of Belgium, the moral indignation might have been

satisfied in scorn. In any case, such an explanation leaves the war impulse totally untouched in reference to the individual man who flew to arms. It seems impossible to attribute the war spirit to any one specific instinct or even aggregate of instincts in their primitive form, although the presence of many instinctive dispositions can be discovered in it. Men were swept off their feet, they knew not how, and so many different explanations of the phenomenon have been given, that one feels that none of them can be quite correct.

As is indicated by the quotation at the head of this section, Shakespeare attributes the war spirit to the operation of self-respect. And in many minds such a motive was probably present at the outbreak of the Great War and at critical periods during its continuance. In other minds, however, self-respect acted as a restraint from war, rather than as a motive towards it. There was a kind of conscientious objector with whom conscience was only another name for cowardice, but there was another kind whose self-respect did not permit him to take life or to connive at the taking of it. On the other hand, there was in the minds of many of the men who were not conscientious objectors a strong impulse of self-respect which prompted to enlistment. "It was not," writes Sir Martin Conway, "in many cases the sporting desire to fight that led these youths to enlist. It was often a sheer sense of duty. 'I look upon the profession of arms,' said one of them, 'with unutterable loathing. But, by Heaven, I will not stay here and let the other fellows fight for me without taking a hand myself.'"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Crowd in Peace and War*, p. 305.

Here self-respect is seen as an impulse working in two opposite directions, and something further seems to be required in explanation of the choice that was made.

On the other hand, approaching the problem from the standpoint of his experience in Germany, the then American Ambassador at Berlin, Dr. James W. Gerard, attributes the war spirit in that country to fear. "To the outsider," he writes, "the Germans seem a fierce and martial nation. But in reality, the mass of the Germans, in consenting to the great sacrifice entailed by their enormous preparations for war, have been actuated by fear. . . . I am convinced that the fear of war, induced by an hereditary instinct, caused the mass of the Germans to become the fools and dupes of those who played upon this very fear in order to create a military autocracy."<sup>1</sup> He is referring, I think, not to fear so much as to the more fundamental impulse of self-preservation of which fear is the emotional expression in certain circumstances. The primitive instinct in which fear is present as an emotion is generally described as one that prompts to flight, or concealment, or both, but only when a state approximating to despair has been reached does it prompt one to fly at rather than away from the object of fear. Fear has often prompted men to avoid battle, but only when something less inhibitive to action has been present has it prompted a man to offer himself for battle, except, of course, when his fear gave him the courage of despair. And this is no less true of the aggregate of individuals who compose a nation. Fear may prompt the nation to make terms with

<sup>1</sup> *My Four Years in Germany*, pp. 57, 58.

those it fears, but it cannot be a sufficient explanation of a martial spirit, nor of a war mood that carries a people into and through a great war.

Most men who entered the army as volunteers in the early days of the war seemed utterly incapable of explaining why they did so. In *The Barber of Putney* a life-like character makes this naïve confession : " What makes anyone 'list or do anything ? There's things as makes a chap do things. 'E can't tell why. I think the band and the colours and all that got me. I saw the way the girls looked at the Guards coming up the Mall. I expect it was that. Allus was a romantic chap. May have been something in my blood, too." Here a number of instinctive tendencies are mentioned as entering into the war spirit. The band and the sight of marching men was an appeal to a primitive herd instinct. The sex instinct was aroused when the speaker saw the attraction that soldiers had for women. And behind the phrase ' something in my blood ' many things may lurk. It might cover what is meant by patriotism, or rather those instinctive tendencies of self-assertion which are aroused by an attack upon the country towards which there is an extension of the sentiment of self-regard : it might also refer to a primitive instinct of combativeness. Practically every man who has attempted to give a reason for his enlistment is very vague about it. Even those who have spoken about ideals of righteousness and freedom leave the impression that they are rationalising an action which was due to much more primitive causes. There were indecencies and social barbarities perpetrated in the years of peace, against which no ideal of righteousness stirred

men in the way that war did. In the *Keeling Letters*, edited by Mr. H. G. Wells, a young Cambridge graduate and former Socialist and pacifist attempts to explain his enlistment in the first days of the war. He has no personal hostility towards the German people, nor is he inclined to believe the stories of atrocity, though he is willing to admit the possibility of their truth. He is frankly moved by a blend of curiosity and self-aggression. "Am I not justified," he writes, "in doing a thing which is at any rate not dishonourable in itself, and gives one direct experience of another side of life and another way of living altogether, at a time when one is not really wanted as much as ordinarily? The argument that I shall be of no more value than a bus conductor in the ranks doesn't move me at all. I feel that there is some value in standing level with the bus conductor at a time like the present." Later he writes: "I am not going into this job in a simple swelling mood of patriotism. That is there, but there are lots of other things, personal and impersonal, which complicate it."

Reference has already been made to the effect of the band and the colours and the marching men upon the individual. Here is an intensely emotional experience through which one is impelled to merge his individuality in a larger whole. "The point to be made clear," Sir Martin Conway says, "is that absorption into a crowd is not an intellectual but an emotional process. A band passes along a street with colours flying and soldiers marching proudly behind. The onlooker is tempted to march with them, falling into step. He almost feels himself one with them: the collective spirit touches him.

He follows on to barracks and enlists." Here there is a yearning for self-expression, a desire to be in it and to play one's part in it, which entered in some degree into what has been called the war spirit. The same herd instinct was undoubtedly at work in the case of those men who enlisted because their chums did so. They could not bear to be left without the prop of accustomed companionships. Tom enlisted from some cause, and Bill felt that he must go, too. And through his whole experience on active service a man felt that impulse which urged him from solitude to companionship. In times of stress and strain and danger, he could bear things better when he was with others than when alone.

Further, the sex instinct seems to have been present to a greater or less extent in the make up of the war mood. It has been pointed out by Professor McDougall and others how intimately connected are the sex instinct and the instinct of combativeness. Therefore, in the early days of the war reports of outrages against women and children acted as a tremendous incentive in promoting the war spirit throughout the country. In later days the publication of attacks upon hospitals and the violation of the Red Cross aroused the tender emotion and the protective impulse which are so closely related to the maternal instinct. Dr. Charles Platt, writing of Pugnacity, says that it is "an assertion of the ego, which, to go back to the beginning, was probably once sexual—a defence of the mate, and an assertion of individual rights against the intrusion of interlopers."<sup>1</sup> In support of this view is the fact that women themselves were keenly

<sup>1</sup> *The Psychology of Thought and Feeling*, p. 33.



bent upon the promotion of a war spirit—indeed, often more keenly than men were. It was not merely the emancipated ‘flapper’ who went about presenting white feathers to all and sundry who were not in uniform, but even the anxious wife and mother felt the primitive cave-woman within her responding to the primitive cave-man. They blazoned the fact of war: they thrust themselves into uniform: they rushed to make munitions: they were proud of their men: some, indeed, would have been willing to fight, probably under the sway of the maternal instinct, with its protective impulse and its tender emotion, which had been aroused by the sight of the wounded or the stories of outrage. Indeed, at one stage of the war a soldier on his return from leave declared that the women and girls whom he had met at home would have made far fiercer fighters than he or his comrades. We can find the same sex instinct operating in the war spirit of those girls who worked so diligently for the comfort of the men on active service, when they enclosed their names and addresses in parcels sent to the front, feeling greatly elated by a letter of acknowledgment from some unknown soldier. Undoubtedly one seems to find a strong sex impulse operating in the war spirit of both men and women.

But, although there was in the war spirit this impulse which in its primitive form at any rate is so aggressive and so intimately connected with combativeness, there was no general desire to kill. Men enlisted without such an impulse for the most part, unless it was present for reasons of personal revenge, and had to have ‘the spirit of the bayonet’ instilled into them. It was from the sergeant-

instructor that men usually learned that their one object in life and the object of all their training was 'to kill Germans.' The absence of such an impulse was particularly noticeable at the Front. In the heat of an engagement or a trench raid, there was probably such an impulse, but its effect was only momentary and contributed nothing to moral or to the war spirit. Swayed by their own experiences of treachery or brutality on the part of their enemy, or because someone dear to them had been killed, some men fought for revênge. But most men could have subscribed to the words of Robert W. Service :—

And though I strafes 'em good and hard I doesn't 'ate the Boche ;  
 I guess they're mostly decent, just the same as most of us.  
 I guess they loves their homes and kids as much as you or me :  
 And just the same as you or me they'd rather shake than fight.  
 And if we'd happened to be born at Berlin on the Spree,  
 We'd be out there with 'Ans and Fritz, dead sure that we was  
                   right.

A mining engineer, who gave up a sound appointment abroad and paid his fare home in order to enlist as a private in a mining company, would never admit to me that he had any desire to kill. He attributed his action entirely to 'a spirit of adventure'—to use his own words. On further analysis this proved to be a fusion of the desire to be in it, to be one of the crowd, to be engaged in the same kind of work as men with whom he had passed through school and University, a fusion of such an impulse with the instinct of self-assertion to show himself as good a man as others, and the instinct of curiosity. Probably some such explanation would be given by most men who were

capable of introspective self-analysis. Honour, sex, pugnacity, the sporting instinct, self-assertion, the instinct of the herd—all these can be discovered within the war mood, but only in the form of a new synthesis in which it seems impossible to isolate any instinct that has survived in its primitive form, and to see it as the nucleus around which the war mood grows. As a recent writer has said: "What happens is that the war mood exploits archaic instincts which have survived in us, though in a modified form. Human motives are amazingly complex, and can seldom be traced back to a single instinct which can be claimed to have survived in its original form."

It seems clear from the account that has been given of the mood under which men enlisted, and the spirit in which the war was carried on, that intellectual considerations had very little to do with these things, at any rate in the earlier stages of their manifestation. In its evolution the war spirit seems to have developed within three well-marked stages, which correspond to the three levels of cognitive activity, but in none of which is the rational element predominant. There is first the stage of impulse proper, largely conative and emotional in character, but including cognitive elements as well in so far as it involves perception and attention to the situation in which it is evoked. Attention, however, depends upon interest, which, in its turn, depends upon the presence of some innate, impulsive tendency which is more powerfully excited than any other by the situation that has arisen. Bosanquet teaches that "attention is merely apperception in the Herbartian sense, the

fusion of an idea with a mass of congruous ideas." <sup>1</sup> But there is nothing of this logical discrimination between elements within the total situation in the primary stage of the war impulse. Some dynamic conative tendency is immediately evoked in response to the environment of war. Only thus can one account for the fact that men attended to the call of war more readily than to the appeal of home or business or comfort or social responsibility. Logical control of the situation would have furnished a different answer from the one given by archaic impulses.

We are still on an impulsive level when we regard the war mood at the stage of 'free ideas.' Reflection enables us to call up past experiences and to forecast future events. Ideas about the enemy and about our own country and our own people have become implanted in the mind, and these are of such a character as to reinforce the working of those archaic impulses and instinctive dispositions that are evoked by war. The emotional impulses that become organised around an object or the idea of an object in the form of sentiments are of a more enduring and more intense character than would otherwise be the case. It is at this stage that the war spirit may be most easily evoked in crowds, arousing them to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. The imagination is then impressed, but, as Le Bon points out, "the fact is never achieved by attempting to work upon the intelligence or reasoning faculty, that is to say, by way of demonstration. It was not by means of cunning rhetoric that Antony succeeded in making the populace rise against the murderers of Caesar :

<sup>1</sup> McDougall. *Social Psychology*. p. 377.

it was by reading his will to the multitude and pointing to the corpse." <sup>1</sup> Argument may, indeed, at this stage be able to show the enemy or one's own country in such a light as to promote the creation of a sentiment favourable to the formation of a war spirit, but it can only do so in the interests of some powerful disposition that is already present, and by consent of that disposition. In so far as ideas are at work, they simply guide and control strong emotional and instinctive tendencies which have been already evoked, or towards which there are strong predispositions.

At a still later stage the consciousness of self enters more strongly into the war impulse. The ideals with which one identifies oneself occupy a foremost place in consciousness. The whole dignity of one's manhood insists that one must do what seems to be right. Sentiments of revenge and resentment or of patriotism may be present, but above them there arises the self-regarding sentiment. One would rather keep out of it all, perhaps, but one is yet impelled to do one's bit at whatever cost. When the war had been in progress for some time its impulse was probably raised to this level among those who voluntarily took part in it. The intrinsically stronger impulse in very many cases—perhaps in every case—would be to keep out of it, to preserve one's life, and to maintain oneself in such comfort as one could. None the less the weaker impulse of some ideal of conduct overcame it, reinforced by that co-ordination of conative dispositions which we call 'the self.' The impulse is now the impulse of the Will, which is widely recognised to-day as being

<sup>1</sup> *The Crowd*, p. 78.

"no mere idea with no conative energy, but the whole unity or synthesis of our conative nature."

At every level of consciousness it is an impulsive tendency that is shown by the war spirit, for even will is seen to be without power to make men act rationally under certain conditions. Men would act much more rationally if they never went to war, and, war having arisen, arguments which should preponderate in favour of abstention from it lose their weight. War is an irrational affair from first to last. It is a persistent refutation of such a view as that of Professor J. M. Baldwin, who says: "Our action is always the result of our thought, of the elements of knowledge which are at any time present in the mind."<sup>1</sup> Many other men would have agreed with the one who said to me, "I was a fool to join up, but I know that if another war ever crops up, I'll likely be as big a fool again." Reason is a comparatively late development of mind, and it is the earlier dispositions, the simpler pre-formed brain patterns, which are most easily excited in the presence of the primitive environment of war or the threat of war.

It has frequently been taught that self-interest is the prime motive of human action. Bentham taught this when he claimed that pleasure or relief from pain is the sole possible object of desire or will. Desire, however, is not for pleasure, but for objects. "We only find pleasure when we get what we want. We must, therefore, want something first."<sup>2</sup> Why we want one thing rather than another, and find pleasure in one thing rather than in something else,

<sup>1</sup> *The Story of the Mind*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> A. B. Lindsay, *Introduction to Mill's Utilitarianism*, p. 11.

is what requires to be examined : and the explanation seems to carry us back to causes which are neither rational nor self-interested. The war impulse finds the individual with a complete or almost complete disregard for his own interest. 'Business as usual' was a slogan which excited no wild enthusiasm in the ranks of self-interested patriotism. It would have been a rationally sound appeal, had self-interest been the prime mover of human action, but war is a proof that irresistible impulses of a non-rational kind are a stronger motive to action than the highest intellectual considerations or the most selfish of material interests. Norman Angell's *Great Illusion* is a great appeal to self-interest, and its arguments are irrefutable by the logic of both reason and experience. Yet it did not hold the nations back from war, or neutralise the war impulse that was aroused. Every casualty list that was published, every account given of the nature of modern warfare, was an appeal to self-interest. Yet these things served only to inflame the war spirit, not to diminish it. Men could not be brought to the point of enlistment by mere argument, and where argument was successful it was by some appeal to dynamic dispositions that it was carried through. Such arguments only had their desired effect when they stirred up dispositions with which are connected such emotions as anger, and fear, and pugnacity, and disgust, and self-assertion. If the disposing tendencies were not present, or present only in weak degree, no amount of reasoning was of the slightest avail in promoting a war spirit.

So far attention has been paid to the war impulse only in its relation to the individual. We have seen

it as a fusion of dynamic tendencies which are primarily of an affective-conative character, preserving that character through every stage of its development. We can only imagine, however, what such an impulse would be like were the individual in complete isolation from his fellows, without any share in a communal life or any instinct towards community. It is probable that such a *monad* would be incapable of any enduring enthusiasm. If such an individual were attacked, he would probably defend himself and experience certain emotional tensions, but his pugnacious impulse would depend altogether upon the physical presence of his enemy. However, the individual is never found in isolation. Among his instincts is the instinct of the herd, whereby he normally tends to become a part of some larger whole. He is a member of some more or less extended community to which he contributes and from which he receives some portion of a common heritage of beliefs and sentiments. The quality of a war impulse is modified tremendously by this fact of community, and by the character of the community in which it is found. The individual is always a member of some crowd in which he realises the harmonious operation of his gregarious instinct. In his treatment of the instincts, Professor McDougall has shown that this gregarious instinct is accompanied by "a mere uneasiness in isolation and satisfaction in being one of a herd."<sup>1</sup> It shows itself as an absorbing interest in the crowd and the desire to be in it. In the presence of a crowd two things happen—and in order that they may happen it is not necessary that the individual should

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 84.



be in physical contact with the crowd : at first the instinct of submission is aroused through the fact that he is only one among many : later, the instinct of self-assertion is evoked by the fact that he is now a component part of a solid block, swept on by its mass emotion. From the former fact arises the suggestibility of the individual in community : from the latter fact arises that fusion of emotional impulses which makes the war spirit so difficult of description and ultimate analysis. Through suggestion and sympathetic induction of the emotions the individual takes something from the whole group of which he is a component, and the final form of the war impulse shows, as has been said, "a synthesis whose essence appears to be a sort of intoxication and craving for the exercise of power." In the cities, where there is a great concentration of individual life, the stream of impulse flowed violently : rumour flew from lip to lip : suggestions were picked up and passed on : emotions were aroused and reinforced as men gathered in groups to discuss the news of the day : and in the end there was displayed a spirit in which it is impossible to trace back the elements to a simple, original source. In the country districts, on the other hand, the individual was in a relatively, and sometimes in an actually, greater state of isolation. Under such conditions there was scarcely any opportunity for the growth of a war spirit. The individual there approximated somewhat to the state of the imaginary being, mentioned above, who had never enjoyed the satisfaction of a gregarious instinct or been influenced by the communal spirit. In country districts the gregarious instinct is relatively weak, and oppor-

tunities for its exercise are relatively few. As a rule, the average countryman does not read the daily paper, and thus loses the sense of being one of a larger whole. He was, therefore, during the war less suggestible and less subject to the experience of sympathetic emotion. His attitude towards the war was largely one of detachment, or, in certain cases, of complete indifference. In many country districts it was no uncommon thing to find that one or more brothers who had gone to the city were swept by the current of war into the Army, while other members of the family in a different social environment remained placidly at home. Such a fact seems to be due to the heightened suggestibility of the individual in a crowd, whether that crowd be the highly amorphous, unorganised collection of individuals in physical contact which generally bears that name, or that still amorphous and unorganised aggregation without personal relations which is more correctly called 'the public.' The war impulse embodied in public opinion produced its effect upon the individual in two ways: first, the extent of the public added greatly to its prestige, and thereby greatly increased the suggestibility of the individual. Ideas which are very widely held have such power that very few individuals have sufficient strength of character to resist them, and moreover, anyone who accepts them satisfies to some extent his gregarious instinct. Secondly, there is at the disposal of the public a great system by which its opinion on any matter becomes vocal. Cumulative suggestion is practised upon the individual by such agencies as the Press, so that all ideas are inhibited, save the one that is everywhere presented and held

in the focus of consciousness. It is by means of such suggestion that those instinctive tendencies are evoked which give the idea its driving force.

To sum up the results of this enquiry into the nature of the war impulse: we have seen that it is based upon the existence of certain dynamic tendencies of an instinctive character within the individual mind, and that these are brought into play by the situation created through war. They are not, however, displayed in any simple, primitive form, but are fused into a complex disposition, of which it seems impossible to give an exact account of the component parts. The fusion of these 'dilapidated instincts' is further increased by the fact of community, whereby there comes a sympathetic induction of emotion and a readiness to follow the trend of public opinion. The whole impulse of war is, in fact, completely outside the sway of reason. It is impulsive and irrational in its initial stage, and it does not completely lose that quality at any point in its development. Looking back upon its imperious demands from our present standpoint, we can only marvel at the things we said and did, and at the unreasoning enthusiasm with which we plunged into war. We feel that there was a great deal of folly about it all—fine and magnificent folly some of it: and even when we try to rationalise our actions in the matter we are left with the feeling that reason had very little to do with most of it. We were swept off our feet by an impulse which we either could not or would not control.

### III

## DANGER INSTINCTS AT THE FRONT

THE actual conditions of life at the Front afforded abundant opportunities for the experience and observation of instinctive and emotional reactions towards danger. Of these the most common were those innate dispositions which are in intimate association with the emotion of fear. With few exceptions, practically every man who has survived the late war, after an actual experience of life within the battle area, will be likely to admit that he has been afraid at one time or another. Fearlessness as a psychical experience was practically unknown. It is, however, no part of a hero's endowment to be fearless in the sense that fear has never been felt: on the contrary, the really heroic act has generally followed the control or suppression of the instinctive tendencies towards flight or concealment which are connected with fear. The writer has heard many men describe, and has himself experienced, the instinctive responses associated with this emotion. They were invariably of an unreflective character. One man told me how he lay on the floor of a roofless house during his first experience of shell-fire, unable to think, unable to move, and gathered up into as small a space as possible. There seems to be in this description a somewhat obvious indication of a

tendency towards concealment. The extreme terror, however, with which the state was accompanied hints at the operation of some other instinctive process. The late Dr. W. H. R. Rivers finds an explanation of such a reaction to danger in "a failure of the instinct of self-preservation taking place in animals when instinctive reactions to danger have been so overlaid by reactions of other kinds that, in the presence of excessive or unusual stimuli, the instinctive reactions fail."<sup>1</sup> In the case of Man there seems to be no one instinctive reaction which inevitably follows the stimulus of danger, for, as the sequel will show, sometimes he seeks to find satisfaction through flight and at other times by hiding from the danger. Probably in the case mentioned both these instinctive tendencies were evoked, frustrating one another's operation, and thereby giving rise to an increase of the affective state connected with both of them. The biological explanation of the emotion which is associated with these instinctive tendencies would seem to be that it exists in order to reinforce energy and thereby to bring about the satisfaction of that bodily condition towards which they prompt. Any interference with the due operation of their promptings would for this reason simply increase the affective quality of the experience. "There is evidence," writes Dr. Rivers, "that collapse and tremor occur especially when there is a frustration of an instinctive reaction."<sup>2</sup> The probability is that the man in question felt prompted to run away, but that something in the circumstances prevented this, and at the same time

<sup>1</sup> *Instinct and the Unconscious* (Second Edition), pp. 55-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 56.

failed completely to satisfy the impulse towards concealment. A similar reaction towards danger was shown in the case of a young officer, known to the writer, who tells how he lay in a state of collapse on the way up to the line shortly after his first introduction to the battle area, and before he had learned to distinguish between the sound made by incoming and outgoing shells. He was alone on the occasion referred to, passing from one unit to another, and at a certain place met with his first considerable experience of shell-fire. As it transpired subsequently, most of the noise of explosion and the incessant whine above his head came from his own batteries and outgoing shells. There was in his case, also, a frustration of instinctive adaptation, and a consequent terrified collapse into a ditch by the side of the road. Normally, the impulse would have been to run from the danger or to dive into the recesses of a dug-out, but the circumstances of the moment hindered the complete satisfaction of either of these tendencies. Probably, too, there occurred some swift judgment as to the uselessness of flight when the sound and flash of explosions came from every direction. The reaction that survived was in the direction of concealment, but it operated under such intellectual and physical conditions as to yield no complete satisfaction.

There is a strong superficial resemblance between such cases of collapse and that immobility which sometimes serves the end of concealment from danger ; but there is all the difference in the world between them upon the affective side. The former type of reaction is accompanied by an increase of fear, whereas the latter serves to inhibit fear. Dealing

with that form of reaction to danger which Dr. Rivers calls Immobility, Dr. Charles Platt writes: "Where concealment is the purpose, very complex developments occur: a degree of bodily tension is achieved, but with it is a slowing of heart and respiration in a general effort to avoid the slightest revealing movement."<sup>1</sup> Changes of this kind occur even when there is not a complete satisfaction of the impulse which has promoted them, but in the latter case, the fear that subserves the operation of this instinct remains. The writer's own experience of coming under shell-fire displayed the bodily symptoms of this striving for concealment. I first heard the whistle of a shell with some degree of curiosity, which was followed by a nervous tremor when it exploded about half a mile away. Later, when I came under close shelling for the first time, I felt utterly incapable of movement: my heart seemed to stop beating, and I felt weak and tremulous. While the shelling was a little way from me I felt a kind of fascination towards it, which subsequently changed to the hope that it would come no nearer: but the first shell that fell close to me produced the effect I have indicated. I was not, however, able to conceal myself, so that fear persisted until I was able to get rid of it by what Rivers calls Manipulative Activity—in other words by going on with the work in hand to the best of my ability.

The completely irrational character of this effort towards concealment, and of the satisfaction resulting from its successful operation, might be illustrated in many amusing ways. On one occasion, after billets had been shelled, an American officer, attached to

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology of Thought and Feeling*, p. 26.

a British battalion, was discovered crouching down behind a chair in the mess-room: while a medical officer was known to have taken shelter at a nasty part of a road behind the trenches by crouching under the lee of a limber-wheel, of which there was very little left except the hub and three or four spokes.

Wounded men, too, have sometimes found a wholly irrational comfort in pulling their blanket over their head at the sound of an approaching shell, or even in the presence of sounds that seemed to them to indicate an approaching shell. I have seen a wounded man do this at the sound of the engine in the Clearing Station to which he was brought. The same striving for concealment and something else can be discovered in the following extract from *Wounded and a Prisoner of War*. The writer had been wounded in the head during the battle of Mons, with the result that he was partially paralysed and was unable to get away. It proved impossible to remove those who had been rendered helpless by their wounds, so eventually he was alone. On the approach of the enemy, he writes, "for some reason I now tried to get away. By seizing a tuft of grass in the left hand I could move along a few inches at a time. After advancing in this manner about a foot along the edge of the road, I collapsed from exhaustion and drew the greatcoat over my head." It may be noted that here there is an impulse towards flight, followed by an impulse towards concealment, or Immobility, as Dr. Rivers prefers to call it.

It would seem that there are two main directions in which the conative tendencies associated with



fear seek to operate—either in the direction of flight or in that of concealment from some threatening situation. It is doubtless true, as Dr. Rivers says, that “Flight from danger is probably the earliest and most deeply seated of the various lines of behaviour by which animals react to conditions which threaten their existence or their integrity.”<sup>1</sup> It is probably a modification of an even earlier instinct, that of repulsion from the loathsome. The close affinity between these two instincts and their affects may, indeed, be seen in the terror that assailed the Germans when they saw the tanks emerging from the mists like some noxious creeping thing. In the case of flight, fear acts as a strong reinforcement of effort to escape from the threatening situation. Concealment, on the other hand, is an instinct of suppression. It seeks to inhibit fear or any impulse which would tend to the slightest revealing movement, though fear seems to act as a spur to its operation until what seems to be adequate concealment has been achieved. War experience seems to support this view, for men found complete satisfaction in the most inadequate shelters. Men have sat with a great deal of contentment during shell-fire under a shelter composed of a sheet of expanded metal and a foot of earth, although anything in the nature of a direct hit would have blown them to pieces. Other men lying under the canvas top of a motor transport lorry have felt comparatively comfortable and safe when the road was being ‘searched’ with shrapnel. Patrick McGill recounts in *The Red Horizon* the peace that was his during a bad night when he dived into a

<sup>1</sup> *Instinct and the Unconscious*, p. 53.

house, only to have his satisfaction dissipated a moment later when a shell exploded above his head and he saw that the house was without a roof. In Man the end to be achieved by this instinctive process would seem to be the banishment of a dangerous situation from the focus of consciousness. For this reason its preservation in Man would seem to be as an alternative reaction to danger, if from any cause the primary tendency towards flight became inoperative. The fact that Man is a reflective being, and that his instincts are in many cases overlaid with intellectual powers, may in some cases promote a swift act of judgment that it is better not to run, and may suppress the tendency to do so, releasing the other tendency towards concealment. In the case of the wounded man at Mons who tried to get away by drawing himself inch by inch along the side of the road, we have an example of the operation of a tendency to flight: and at the moment of his collapse through exhaustion, when flight was no longer possible, we find him pulling his greatcoat over his head in an effort to hide from the danger that was approaching. Similarly, in the case of the wounded man at the Casualty Clearing Station who pulled the blanket over his head as a protection from what he took to be approaching shells, there was present a physical condition which made flight impossible.

All the cases to which reference has been made go to show that in Man concealment may be a very inadequate instinct of self-protection. It would seem that, when he can do no better, he summons to his aid a disposition which had a very definite use, doubtless, in removing primitive Man from

dangerous situations, and which is still usefully operative among many animals, but which in modern Man can be nothing higher than nature's second best. Some element seems to be present in the total content of consciousness which prevents the operation of the primitive impulse of flight, whereupon the tendency to concealment intervenes for the purpose of banishing the threatening situation from consciousness. In so far as it succeeds in doing so, there is the satisfaction which comes from the completion of an instinctive process. Originally it was an instinct directed towards the suppression of every tendency to movement, it prohibited the operation of any disposition that would promote the slightest revealing movement : it therefore suppressed fear which prompted to flight. In Man to-day we find it a dilapidated instinct, aiming only at the suppression of the fear that has aroused it.

A comparison of the tendencies in question seems to suggest the need for some modification in Dr. McDougall's theory of the primary emotions. "Each of the principal instincts," he says, "conditions some one kind of emotional excitement whose quality is specific or peculiar to it : and the emotional excitement of specific quality that is the affective aspect of the operation of any one of the principal instincts may be called a primary emotion." <sup>1</sup> Further, in writing of the instinct which prompts to flight, he says, "In most animals instinctive flight is followed by equally instinctive concealment as soon as cover is reached, and there can be no doubt that in Man the instinct had this double tendency." <sup>2</sup> It is true that he postulates the modification of the efferent

side of any instinct as a result of experience. In the case under consideration, however, it is not merely modification that is shown—unless both tendencies are modifications of a more original instinct of self-preservation—but a complete change of impulse: for there is all the difference in the world between the impulse to get away from a threatening situation and one that is directed merely towards getting away from the consciousness of it. Originally both impulses probably conserved the ends of escape from dangerous situations, their operation being governed partly by the external circumstance as revealed through the perceptual part of the instinct, and partly by the possession of other innate qualities, such as colour and defensive armour among certain of the animals. Thus, the hedgehog conceals itself by rolling itself into a compact ball and remaining motionless, the rabbit or the hare lies prone and merges into the background. In Man, however, this instinct seems to have become so dilapidated as to have completely changed its purpose. It seems to exist in him for the purpose of removing a threatening situation from the focus of consciousness. Originally, the bodily and glandular changes, which the mind appreciates as an emotion of fear, took place in order that the animal might react in the direction of complete immobility and the suppression of every impulse which might reveal its presence. In Man this suppression is achieved, not as a cause of, but as a consequence of concealment. As has already been shown, the very fact that men were under cover or what they thought was cover during shell-fire, even though the shelter was utterly useless as a protection, often seemed

to suppress the fear that would otherwise have been aroused in considerable intensity. The sight of exploding shells was completely banished from consciousness, and even in the most inadequate 'dug-out' there was an improved quality in the sound of explosion. For the same reason the hands instinctively go over the eyes to shut out terrifying sights and over the ears to banish terrifying sounds. A certain satisfaction, as of an instinct of which the end has been fulfilled, is achieved by these movements.

It would seem, then, that while in the animal world flight and concealment are different modifications of an original instinct of escape, in Man the latter has become so completely altered as to have changed the end of its existence. The former exists in its original form as a disposition towards removal from danger, the latter exists mainly as a means of suppressing fear. The instincts were in their original form probably modifications of the same instinct, and for that reason probably the affective tone remains constant in both, even though the impulse that results in concealment has so altered in Man. In him they serve very different purposes, and are to that extent different instincts in him. For this reason it seems necessary to modify Dr. McDougall's statement that each of the principal instincts has an affective quality which is peculiar to it, by pointing out that in man these two instincts have the same affective quality, the same emotional content, although they serve very different ends. It is by reducing them to some original disposition towards escape, I think, that we can get back to the position held by Dr. McDougall.

Although these two instinctive dispositions are served by the same emotion, I do not think that that fact conflicts with the James-Lange theory of emotion. Changes take place within the main organs and tissues of the body in preparation for the form of activity prompted by the situation. These changes involve certain sensations and feeling-tone which are appreciated by the mind as an emotion. The organic changes, however, which are involved in the impulse of flight are not the same as those involved in the impulse towards concealment. Yet the emotion seems to be the same in both cases. The probable explanation would seem to be that some of the visceral and glandular changes common to both are very massive, and thus excite a feeling-tone which dominates both processes.

The most general cause of fear under war conditions was sound of one kind or another. Men were reduced to a state of mental and nervous collapse often by the thunder of battle. One man gives the following vivid description of his feelings during such a situation: "The sang-froid which carried us through many a tight corner with credit utterly deserted us. We were washed-out things. With noses to the cold earth, like rats in a trap, we waited for the next moment, which might land us in eternity." All the dignity and pride of manhood is cast aside at such a time by those who can do nothing but grovel in the mud at the bottom of a dirty ditch, waiting for death itself to relieve them from an interminable inferno of noise.

The excitement of fear was, however, not always due to an intelligent appreciation of danger. It was sometimes induced by the play of imagination

around the unknown possibilities of some situation. I have talked with men who have told about the terrors that came to them at some lonely sentry post, and about their manner of getting rid of these imaginings through concentration of attention upon the duty that had placed them there. Given the appropriate circumstance, an imaginative man will experience fear because of sounds that cannot instantly be reconciled with the ordinary monotone which characterises a battle-front. The author of *The Red Horizon* gives an account of three occasions of this kind, when a thrill of fear, blind and unreasoning, passed through him. Once there came clear to his ears, when he was on sentry duty in the fire trench, a single dreadful cry that rose shrill above war's monotone. On another occasion, in a shattered village, somewhere amid the litter of broken houses, he heard a whimpering cry like a child in pain, ending in a choking gurgle. The whimper of a rat, perhaps, but it terrified him. On the third occasion it was the death-shriek of a man shot through the body that he heard with a thrill of fear. On all three occasions, it may be noted, it was pitch-black night. Probably nervous tension was at its highest in the presence of vast and unknown possibilities that hid in the darkness. On all three occasions the fear seems to have been a form of the terror of the unknown.

It may be asked, Why should the unknown induce fear? By itself and without any qualifying elements, the unknown is a frequent exciting cause of curiosity, and the associated emotion of wonder. It has sometimes drawn men into particularly hazardous adventure, just because of the desire to know what

it might yield in the way of a new experience or of information. An officer of my acquaintance, in the company of another, concluded a very hazardous round of duties in connection with advanced machine-gun posts with a still more hazardous and altogether gratuitous adventure. In broad daylight they entered 'no-man's-land' that they might explore some houses in a village that lay between the trenches. From the description of the adventure I have received, I should infer that other instincts in addition to curiosity asserted themselves eventually, for they brought back a number of worthless articles as a result of their expedition and presumably as a proof of it, and were exceedingly exalted about the whole affair. It was, however, the appeal of the unknown which supplied the chief motive for the adventure, no matter what subsequent motive of acquisition and self-assertion may have contributed to its completion. One of the pair told me that he felt a 'pleasurable thrill of fear' during the operation—a fact that would seem to bear strongly in favour of the sensory-motor theory of the emotions, showing, as it does, that this emotion obeys the same rule as that followed by sensation in general, namely, that a sensation of low intensity is pleasurable, and becomes unpleasant when it is raised to a high intensity of feeling-tone. At low intensity, fear lends an added zest to an adventure, while in its more intense form it is the most dreadful of all experiences.

It seems clear, then, that when the unknown induces fear instead of curiosity, there is some quality in the environment which differentiates the experiences. Under certain conditions the unknown



is so full of unplumbed possibilities of menace, that it may well induce in one a feeling of utter impotence and ineptitude. The solitary sentinel at night feels that he is microscopic in the midst of a great unknown, and things that would not terrify him by daylight assume an exaggerated importance. Fear of this kind is intimately associated with negative self-feeling. It has, indeed, been suggested that negative self-feeling may itself be merely an intellectual refinement of fear in its grosser form, and it would seem that in reference to the fear of the unknown there is something to be said for this view. Certainly, there is a play of the imagination.

To the same cause, I think, must be attributed the fact that aerial bombing was, perhaps, the most nerve-racking and terrifying of all experiences at the Front. Many men found it so, at any rate. The enemy aeroplane that seemed to hover above one's head might be in direct line with a target of which one formed the 'bull's eye,' or it might be very wide of the target, or it might be altogether wide of that target. The unknown element was twofold—when the bomb would drop and where. The unmeasured and immeasurable possibilities of the situation filled many, perhaps most, with fear. There seemed, too, in many cases to be a special modification of afferent inlet for enemy aeroplanes, and an instant recognition of their whine even during hours of sleep.

It was, moreover, much more possible to control the instinctive reactions of fear during ordinary shelling than in the case in question. In the former case there was generally a more or less intelligent appreciation of the position of the target

and of one's own relation to it. The menace generally came from one quarter, and it thus became possible to estimate chances and to relate oneself to them in appropriate ways. Not so in the other case. The experience of coming under an anti-aircraft barrage from our own batteries produced a similar experience of fear in certain circumstances—or perhaps anxiety would be a better description of the experience in this case, although fear is also involved in it. Probably several batteries would be engaged in shelling an enemy squadron from as many different points of the compass, and when the whistle of nose-caps or empty shrapnel casing as it came to earth was heard, it was impossible to tell in what direction it was likely to fall. The conative impulse of fear sought appropriate expression, but the intellectual conditions under which the emotion was aroused induced an additional anxiety as to one's chances of escape from 'nose-caps' and empty 'casing.'

Many young soldiers have experienced similar disquieting feelings just before 'zero hour' on the morning of an advance. Symptoms of fear and anxiety were clearly shown. They were pale and nervous, and sometimes there was an almost uncontrollable impulse to run away. Thoughts of what lay in front and of the people at home would come, and unknown possibilities of every kind would be suggested by the imagination. Opposing conative tendencies would develop—the impulse to get away from it all, and the impulse to be up and doing. The young soldier would like to show that he is not a coward, but he feels very like one—and he does not want to be killed. Here thought is filling in the vague shapes furnished by the unknown

possibilities in such a way as to make a man feel very small and powerless. Should the spell of the unknown be broken, however, by a bout of shelling, or should it become necessary for a man to bear a hand with a wounded comrade, such fear will vanish, as it will also vanish, for the most part, when the actual advance begins. The very fact that he is doing something, that the unknown has vanished behind something concrete, will change the intellectual conditions under which the impulse has been working. Conflicting dispositions will cease to operate, negative self-feeling will disappear in the presence of self-assertive elements, and the whole conative force of the 'self' will be directed to the object in hand.

It would appear, then, that the emotion of fear is the accompaniment not only of different instinctive impulses, flight and concealment, but, in addition, that under certain conditions a kind of fusion of disposition is revealed in the operation of this emotion. In face of the unknown the instinct of subjection is aroused and shows itself intimately connected with fear. The emotional experience which is evoked in presence of the unknown has all the effective qualities of fear, but there seem to be elements from more than one disposition at work in producing it.

Frequently, one has heard men commenting upon the strangeness of the fact that the tendency to fear was almost always more easily excited when they were alone than it was when they were in the company of others. On the other hand, however, inclusion in a panic-stricken group has often had the effect of arousing or increasing fear. Men have been known to 'lose their nerve' because other

men around them were in a state of collapse. It is probable that these two opposed tendencies are due to different causes arising within the gregarious instinct. The normal man likes to be in the company of his fellows, and when separated from them feels a certain disquietude, which reaches its most acute form in what is called loneliness. The average man has a highly developed herd-instinct. It is likely that this instinct has been developed in the race because of its value for the protection of the individual in times of danger. In any case, in face of a danger which attacks one when alone, the disquieting sense of aloofness is greatly intensified. Thus in the presence of danger it would seem that the two disquieting emotional dispositions of fear and loneliness fuse with one another and reinforce the strength of their separate operation. Negative self-feeling also contributes something to the resultant emotional state. On the other hand, in a group of men one feels a sense of solidarity, which is the greater the larger the group of which one is a unit. The physical presence of other men arouses a feeling of invulnerability and confidence. All animals seek the presence of their fellows in times of danger. The whole herd can face the danger and present a solid front to it. It is likely that here is to be found the cause why men advancing in open order show an inevitable tendency to converge and 'bunch.'

On the other hand, there have been occasions when the presence of others has had a very different effect, increasing rather than diminishing the tension of fear, and arousing more intensely the impulse of flight. Men have been together acting as one man under the voice of authority. A time comes, how-

ever, when their officers have been killed or wounded, and there are not even non-commissioned officers to lead them. Without a leader, every crowd is an unorganised mob and subject to all the play of mob emotion, and it is often the presence of a leader, to whom each man owes allegiance, which gives a crowd its feeling of solidarity and invincible power. In this case all the leaders are gone. If some natural leader can arise among the men, all may yet be well, or, failing this, each man will see his own symptoms of fear reflected in the faces of those around him. His emotion is thereby increased, and soon a very panic of fear sets in. It grows like a rolling snow-ball, and every man with whom the crowd comes in contact is gathered into it, adding his own quota of emotion to the general panic, until the man whom Sir Martin Conway calls 'the crowd compeller' is met. One Canadian subaltern known to the writer gained the D.S.O. through giving back to a panic-stricken crowd of men their sense of solidarity, and bringing them back into a critical part of the line which they had evacuated. There have even been whispers of non-combatants who, through their own self-control and assurance, have restored to a flying mob the feeling of solidarity which for the time being had been lost.

A probable explanation of both contagious courage and contagious fear has been given by Professor McDougall in what he calls 'the law of the sympathetic induction of the emotions.' "In the gregarious animals," he writes, "each of the principal instincts has a special perceptual inlet (or recipient afferent part) that is adapted to receive and to elaborate the sense impressions made by the

expressions of the same instinct in other animals of the same species.”<sup>1</sup> The shouts and words by which men show their satisfaction at being present in a group, the hand touch, the whisper, add to the sense of satisfaction which each man feels, and thereby inhibit the sense of loneliness which is so much a pre-disposing cause of fear, or which is so intimately connected with fear through the instinct of subjection and the emotion of negative self-feeling. Fear seems to have an intimate connection with the gregarious instinct, and to possess afferent inlets of the kind postulated by Dr. McDougall. An explanation suggested by some writers is that the emotional state is excited in crowds by a common object. Such an explanation, however, will scarcely account for the marvellous increase of the emotion when it affects an aggregate of individuals: and it certainly cannot be an explanation of the panic which seizes other individuals who are gathered into the crowd after it has become thoroughly disorganised through fear and has left the exciting cause of its fear behind it. Panic has laid its hand on men who were miles away from danger during a great battle, when a rumour spread that the enemy had broken through on a wide front. Even men who at first laughed at the rumour were eventually affected by it, when they saw consternation on the faces of those around them. A despatch rider has described one such panic which he encountered far behind the line, and which grew less and less as he approached the actual area of operation. Men who were in such a position as did not demand the exercise of the whole conative force of their being were peculiarly

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 93.

subject to panic of this kind. Under the intellectual conditions furnished by a rumour, hope drew them in one direction and despondency in another, producing a state of anxiety into which fear entered at the thought of what the consequences would be, should the rumour prove true : and once that fear has been evoked and the outward signs of it clearly seen in others, it is increased, in the manner postulated by Professor McDougall, through the very fact that it is shared by others.

Another example of the operation of the gregarious instinct may be found in the increase of strength and the new power of endurance which came to men at the end of a weary march, when some man began to whistle a march tune or to play it on a mouth organ. The weary feet picked up the time and men felt the change in those around them. They were plodding on in utter weariness, each man conscious of very little except his own bodily state : someone would start to hum a tune, another and another would pick it up, until nearly every man was humming or whistling it. Then each man would realise that he was one of the mass of men, and the sense of satisfaction accruing would supply additional conative energy for the further toil and endurance.

Men have sometimes commented on the strange fact that they could bear themselves better when they had an actual job of work to do, than when it was completed. Two officers had to visit a forward position one night, and in order to reach it were compelled to pass through a very ugly zone of fire. They admitted afterwards that they did not know how they had managed to get through it alive. Of course they did not like it, but they experienced

no particular discomfort of fear. However, what seemed to them much more strange was that when they were on their way back and far behind the special danger zone, two or three gas-shells 'popping' somewhere in their neighbourhood sent fear through them and made them run like hares. The explanation would seem to be that on their way forward the whole conative force of their being was directed towards the successful issue of the work upon which they were engaged. The whole self was directed towards the completion of the duty. Conative tendencies of another kind might have been stirred, but were not developed—or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say that instinctive dispositions towards action of another kind might have been stirred, but were kept outside the focus of consciousness. It is probable, however, that in the region of the unconscious mind they continued to function in the form of a mental tension which would assert its power in the appropriate circumstance, when once the effort of the will had been relaxed. "The essential achievement of the will," says Professor James in a familiar dictum, "is to attend to a difficult object and hold it fast before the mind." According to the teaching of some of the most outstanding psychologists, the man who performs a difficult duty, as in the instance cited, does so by reason of the maintenance of one idea in the focus of consciousness and the repression of everything that would tend to exclude that idea. Conflicting motives of an instinctive character do not, however, cease to exist. They are not in the focus of consciousness, but they can be drawn into it at any moment, when they will at once assert their power



The instinct of fear does this very easily when the effort of the will has been relaxed, as it was when the two officers had completed their work and were well back towards their quarters.

It is to be noted, however, in this instance, that there were two men engaged in the work. It has frequently been admitted by men who have done somewhat daring things that they could not have done them had another man not been with them. A man who had done something of this kind once told me that he would have been ashamed not to do what the other man could do. "I felt," he said, "that if he could do it, so could I: and I should have been ashamed not to try." In addition to whatever other forces were at work, there is here a plain indication of the operation of the self-regarding sentiment, with its emotional quality of self-respect. The presence of another man not only satisfied to some extent a man's gregarious instinct, thus hindering the development of that disquieting emotion which loneliness evokes, but to a certain extent the impulse of rivalry was also operative, showing itself in a complex emotional state in which the shame of having to give up and the exaltation of succeeding were balanced within a disposition to get the better of some circumstance. Army regulations are, as a rule based upon psychological principles, for which reason it was the common practice, and in many cases the inevitable rule for men to go in pairs when undertaking certain duties of a hazardous kind, even when they involved no physical impossibility of being completed alone.

From the account furnished in this chapter of various types of war experience which involved

## 82      A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

adaptation to danger, it seems evident great controlling and compelling impulses were at work, innate and instinctive tendencies which are not necessarily of an intellectual character, and which, even when they can be shown to possess intellectual refinements, do not owe their dynamic energy to such reflective factors.

## IV

### DANGER INSTINCTS AT THE FRONT—

*continued*

IN addition to those reactions to danger which are associated with fear, there is found in war the operation of a different type of disposition. What seems like an instinct of pugnacity may be aroused, and may show itself in an outburst of angry feeling. Contrary to what might be expected, however, the free, untrammelled outflow of this disposition added very little, if anything, to the value of the fighting soldier: quite the contrary, in fact, when it showed itself in its crudest form. None the less it contained the energy which carried men to their objective and beyond it. According to the showing of Dr. Rivers, pugnacity is governed by the principle which operates in all instinctive reactions—the ‘all-or-none’ principle through which certain dispositions, if they are aroused at all, tend to operate at full strength. They fail, in other words, to show any nicely adjusted scale of gradation to the exigencies of the situation which has aroused them. In the case of pugnacity, however, some additional principle seems, I think, to be involved. One of the objects in the minds of bayonet instructors was to arouse a fiercely pugnacious spirit in the instructed. Bayonet exercise may have had such an effect upon

certain men—though of this I write with diffidence—but many men, I know, plunged their bayonet into the bag that served as a target without any specially pugnacious feelings. I know one man, however, who felt differently when challenged by one of his officers to attack him. I shall have to refer to this case subsequently, merely stating at this point that the man attacked his challenger with the utmost ferocity. In the latter stages of the war bayonet fighting was largely displaced by the use of the bomb, and in the employment of this weapon a cool head and a steady eye were required. It took a prolonged course of training to teach men to keep their temper should a pugnacious impulse be aroused. Men were taught that they should not get angry when they made a raid, since the blind passion of attack would probably make their effort less effective. In spite of such warnings, however, men sometimes did allow this disposition to become their master for the time being. In an advance, for example, it has sometimes led men into a position where they have been cut to pieces because they were not in a state of mind to make precautionary adjustments of their flanks and rear. Part of military training consists, as Dr. Rivers says, “in putting the crude actions of the primitive instinct of aggression under subjection to carefully discriminative and chosen actions based on intelligence.”<sup>1</sup> For the most part the emotion associated with pugnacity had to be suppressed, or to show itself in some other way than that in which it would be most naturally displayed. Sometimes anger found a safety valve in lurid speech, at other times, say

<sup>1</sup> *Instinct and the Unconscious*, p. 62.

after an unsuccessful offensive, in bitter denunciation of men higher in authority. The anger which could not expend itself against an enemy who had not been overcome was in this latter case transferred against a Staff which seemed to be at fault or against statesmen who seemed to be both inept and indifferent. It is quite likely that the operation of such a 'displacement of affect,' prevented the development of a spirit of revolt among the troops, such as would probably have become operative had such a channel of relief been closed.

It is to be noted that in speaking of pugnacity Dr. Rivers calls it an 'instinct of aggression.' This expression seems to indicate the direction in which an explanation of this disposition is to be sought. The instinct of self-assertion is very strongly aroused when the pugnacious impulse is evoked, and the latter seems to be related to the former in some very intimate way, either as a modification of it or more probably as a principle operating within it. According to the teaching of Dr. McDougall, pugnacity is one of the principal instincts, but it occupies a peculiar place among them. It refuses to submit to his definition of an instinct as "an inherited or innate psycho-physical disposition which determines its possessor to perceive and to pay attention to objects of a certain class, to experience an emotional excitement of a particular quality upon perceiving such an object, and to act in regard to it in a particular manner, or, at any rate, to experience an impulse to such action."<sup>1</sup> He himself is compelled to admit that pugnacity cannot be brought under this

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 29.

definition, since it has no specific excitant, and is evoked in every case through opposition to some other instinctive tendency and the thwarting or possible thwarting of its satisfaction. Pugnacity seems to arise when any interest, in which the self is involved, is opposed or its satisfaction hindered. Regarded from the physiological standpoint, there is, where this disposition is aroused, an excitement of the adrenal glands, and the release of adrenin, by means of which arterial pressure is increased, the pulse quickened, and muscular activity greatly reinforced—all in preparation for the removal of the obstructing object. The sense of power is thereby enhanced. Regarded from the psychological point of view, the characteristic emotion of anger probably serves to increase the positive self-feeling which has been weakened by the opposition or thwarting of some interest in which the self is involved.

Many considerations point to the probability of the view here advanced. There is the fact that pugnacity and anger are never found in isolation from some other instinctive process, and that it is most likely that the self is, for the time being at any rate, deeply interested in the successful issue of those processes at the moment they are opposed. There are also many examples of the operation of this impulse during the war which point in the same direction. I have asked men how they felt when, during training, they were violently prodding a bayonet into a bag of straw. Very few of them, I believe, felt anything like anger or the slightest stirring of pugnacity during such operations. Their self-assertion was in no way opposed by an object which neither threatened nor showed the possibility

of threatening their supremacy over it. On the other hand, a man to whom I have already referred was invited by an officer whom he disliked, and from whom he had suffered many slights, to cross bayonets with him, asking him to behave as he would towards a German, and promising to treat him in the same way. The man tore the officer's neck with the point of the bayonet within a hair's breadth of the jugular vein. I asked him why he acted in that way and what he felt. He replied that he felt mad, and that he had done it because he knew that this officer just wanted to make a fool of him before the rest of the men. Yet the same man told me that he could never feel any excitement when he was brought forward to attack the target. In the presence of one from whom his instinct of self-assertion had already suffered, and in a situation which promised the possibility of its being still further thwarted, the man's pugnacity and anger were aroused in the effort to regain what had been lost, and to stand triumphant over the person who had lowered his self-esteem. In his book *Fear*, Patrick McGill tells of a somewhat similar case. In this case the man suffered from a sense of inferiority, partly natural and partly induced by army training. On being asked by the sergeant-instructor, a man of great agility and a skilled bayonet-fighter, to try and 'spit' him, he almost succeeded in doing so, attacking him with the utmost ferocity. Cases like these seem to point to the operation of an impulse of self-assertion, and to pugnacity as a principle within it through which the injury to positive self-feeling might be removed. Normally the operation of pugnacity is seen as an

impulse to get the better of some object which limits in any way the satisfaction of the sense of power and worth, or which even seems to threaten such limitation. Thus, when a country receives an insult from a foreign Power, or when some land is threatened in which one's own country has a protective interest, or when some violence is perpetrated against those with whom one identifies oneself in any way, a pugnacious impulse is aroused. It seems, however, to become operative only in the interest of an impulse of self-assertion. 'Are we going to allow our country to be treated in this way?' 'Are we going to allow little Belgium to be overrun?' 'Are we going to allow our position to be degraded?' 'Are we going to stand by while our men are being butchered?' Questions like these, flung at men while the war spirit is being aroused, are an appeal to the instinct of self-assertion, and where they become effective they result in feelings of pugnacity and anger. A nation that is too proud to fight has not had its impulse of self-assertion assaulted to the extent needed for the excitement of its pugnacity and anger. It has suffered nothing which has diminished its positive self-feeling. Should it feel that emotional state which is called 'contempt,' it will only serve to increase the sense of its own superiority through the presence of positive self-feeling in that emotion. When it sees its danger, however, as something that threatens its national self-assertiveness, it will respond with an outburst of national pugnacity and anger.

In the previous section we saw how closely related are fear and negative self-feeling, or the emotion of subjection, so closely related, indeed, that the



fear of the unknown seems to involve some fusion of the dispositions which underlie these two emotional states. The relationship between fear and anger—normally so opposite in their conative tendencies, the one seeking to escape from danger by avoiding it, the other by overcoming it—is not so easily explained. If the account which has been given of pugnacity be accepted, it will be clear that the result of the successful thwarting of the instinct of self-assertion will be a feeling of subjection and inferiority, and that pugnacity and anger are evoked in the process of preventing such a consummation. Not only does the sense of inferiority arouse the disposition which is associated with fear under certain circumstances, but in certain cases it also promotes the operation of anger. Indeed, the war has shown cases in which men passed in an instant from reactions which are characteristic of fear to those which are equally characteristic of anger. Anyone who has had experience of the strange things that happened to men's nervous systems at the Front will probably be prepared to accept an illustration of this strange alternation which was supplied to me in the winter of 1916, but for the truth of which I am not able to vouch through first-hand experience. According to this story an Australian soldier, upon whom the horrors of trench life had taken great effect, went to one of his officers and told him that he intended to desert, and that he did not mind if he was shot there and then. The officer is said to have replied that, if such were the case, he might as well get shot in a decent way, and recommended him to try and get a couple of snipers who were concealed in a little clump of

trees. According to the story, the man leaped over the parapet and walked without disguise or concealment across 'no-man's-land,' being fired at and slightly wounded in the hand as he did so. The pain of the wound made him furious, with the result that he brought in the two snipers and regained the self-esteem which for the moment he had lost. The first state of the man seems to show that reaction to danger which is expressed by flight. The whole process was initiated by a desire to get away from the fearful conditions of his life. Whether he was a naturally self-assertive man who wanted to escape from a growing sense of inferiority, but was held back from the employment of what Rivers calls 'manipulative activity,' as a result of which he would probably have escaped from such feelings of inferiority, I am unable to say. I think it likely, however, that he was such a type of man. At any rate, the trivial hurt he had received from the bullet impelled him to seek to establish some kind of superiority over the snipers who had caused the pain. A sharp pain which does not incapacitate makes a man feel somewhat inferior in reference to the cause which has produced it, and anger against that cause arises to reinforce the movements which will tend to get the better of that cause.

Dr. McDougall criticises adversely a statement of Professor Westermarck, who says, "Resentment may be described as an aggressive attitude of mind towards a cause of pain. Anger is sudden resentment in which the hostile reaction against the cause of pain is unrestrained by deliberation."<sup>1</sup> It is not

<sup>1</sup> *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, quoted in *Social Psychology*, p. 142.

clear how an aggressive attitude of the mind can be divorced from the impulse of self-assertion and its associated emotion of positive self-feeling. This however, is the view held by Professor Westermarck. On the other hand, so far as his words are concerned, there seems nothing incompatible between them and the view I have tried to maintain.

The close affinity between the two emotional states of fear and anger may be seen further in the difficulty of distinguishing between their bodily reactions in certain circumstances. Actions which seem to be the result of anger have sometimes been prompted by fear. "In Man," writes Dr. Rivers, "acts of aggression, or acts which have the appearance of aggression, may be the expression of fear. A man in a state of sheer terror may do violence to others in the way of his own safety."<sup>1</sup> Men who were advancing after a bombardment of the enemy's trenches, at a certain stage of the war, sometimes found themselves confronted by a barrier of uncut wire entanglement. They tore at the wire with their hands and hacked at it with their bayonets in an attempt to break through. It is impossible to tell, however, whether it was an impulse of pugnacity directed against something that had interfered with their desire to go forward and establish their superiority to the enemy, or fear of being caught in the wire and shot to pieces by machine-gun bullets and shrapnel, which caused the violence of their reaction to the situation. Either impulse would explain their action. In some men the former disposition would probably be aroused, in others the latter. Both Professor McDougall and Dr. Rivers, however,

<sup>1</sup> *Instinct and the Unconscious*, p. 57.

suggest that anger could not be operative in a case such as this. The former states, in reference to the angry feelings aroused by a blow, that "anger would not be aroused if the blow came from an impersonal source."<sup>1</sup> Dr. Rivers, also, makes the statement that anger "will only come into play where the source of danger is another animal."<sup>2</sup> Yet I have seen children thump the floor on hurting themselves by a fall, and kick at a door or table into which they had bumped when engaged upon some matter of interest to them. I believe that anger may be aroused against any object, personal or impersonal, which interferes with the operation of any impulse in such a way as will oppose or thwart the satisfaction of the instinct of self-assertion. It is true that in the case mentioned anger might have been aroused against the enemy who had put the wire in the way of the men's advance or against the gunners who had failed to remove it, but it is just as likely to have been evoked by the unexpected barrier to their advance.

I have found some difficulty in reconciling the view of pugnacity which has been advanced in these pages with the presence of this impulse in an officer who stood by the guns during a bombardment which preceded an advance, and who caught himself shouting, "That's it, boys. Give them hell! Give them hell!" Normally, he was a most self-contained man and very averse to the use of the somewhat sultry outbursts which some men used so readily as a vent for pent-up rage. Commenting upon it to me afterwards, he spoke of it as one of the strange

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 66 (note).

<sup>2</sup> *Instinct and the Unconscious*, p. 54.

effects of war upon mentality. Looking back upon it, I think that his rage was due to nothing so much as interference with the impulse of self-assertion in circumstances when nervous tension was very great. He was awaiting the end of the bombardment so that he and the force with which he was identified might go forward. The enemy's trenches, the enemy's wire, and the enemy himself were thwarting that impulse. These all stood in the way of that advance which would bring the war one stage nearer to its close and establish the supremacy of the force with which he identified himself over the enemy who had held it back so long. At the moment there does not seem to have been any impulse which was opposed or thwarted, except the one I have mentioned.

The same factor can probably be seen at work in the case of a man who had his fire put out and his dixie of tea spilled by an enemy shell, and who dealt with the situation by using the most blood-curdling language. He would probably have tried to destroy the man who had fired the gun, could he have laid hold of him at that moment. It was not only that the impulse of nutrition was thwarted, for that could have easily been satisfied by sharing another man's breakfast. More important was the fact that it was something he himself had been doing which had been interrupted. It was 'his' fire—probably he had carried the wood for it from a long way and with some inconvenience: it was 'his' dixie of tea that had been destroyed: it was the work upon which 'he himself' had been bent that was interrupted. The man's self-feeling suffered violence from the occurrence, trivial though it was

in comparison with other experiences of shell-fire which excited no rage whatever.

In none of the cases mentioned is there any feature, I think, which cannot be reconciled with the view that pugnacity and the impulse of self-assertion are associated in some peculiarly deep and intimate fashion. Popular speech treats the pugnacious man as identical with the self-assertive man, and there seems to be no good reason for refusing to admit such an identification. At any rate, it seems clear that there could be no pugnacity in Man, if there were not in addition to this a deeply-seated instinct of self-assertion.

## V

### SENTIMENT AT THE FRONT

THE story of psychological events that unfolds itself under war conditions is very largely one of instinctive and emotional reactions. They are not, however, always of the comparatively simple kind just considered. John Oxenham, who visited the war area in France in the spring of 1918, writes: "One man tells me that unless men became almost dehumanised—that is, akin to the beasts of the field—they could not possibly stand the unnatural conditions of life out here. But this I discount." Yet despite his disclaimer, it remained true that so far as tendency was concerned, there was always the risk of slipping back into the vortex of primitive forces. In the early days of a man's experience of warfare in a strange land, speculation was easily excited, and the intellectual processes were easily aroused by the very novelty of everything. As time went on, however, the higher intellectual functions of the mind tended to fall more and more into disuse, and the instinctive will-to-live predominated. Speculation then became more and more a matter concerned with food and rest from the intolerable strain, and expressed the fundamental will-to-live in the question of questions, When will the war end? In the face of the ever-present threat of mutilation or

death, there arose a tendency to suppress any contemplation of the possibility of such things. One must fight on : one must hold out—therefore, better not think of what may happen to oneself or one's chums. I remember asking a man one evening if he had noticed something or other about a German aeroplane which had been brought down in flames near a part of the line where he had been at the time : his reply was, " I suppose I saw it, but it takes more than that to excite one's interest these times." There was only one tension that excited men's interest, the fundamental tension of life itself. As John Oxenham himself admits, despite his former disclaimer, " It is the simple, bed-rock things that bulk largest in men's minds—food, drink, smokes, sleep, warmth and shelter in wintry weather, and generally such bodily comforts as may be available."

There were, however, counteracting forces against the dehumanising tendencies of life at the Front. The ' polish and pipe-clay ' which irritated men so much when they were taken out of the trenches for a short rest was based upon a sound psychological truth. It was designed to preserve men's self-respect, since it has always been recognised that the self-respecting soldier is the most efficient soldier. His pride in his unit, which is so important a matter, will tend to disappear if he sees it unkempt, and his own filthy and unshaven appearance reflected in all who are around him. A man's own self-respect and his sentiment of *esprit de corps* are intimately connected, so that anything that maintains or develops his self-respect will tend towards the furtherance of his pride in his unit, and anything that develops his pride in his unit will tend to



further his own self-respect. There will come times in the life of every soldier when either self-respect or *esprit de corps* will be the only thing that stands between him and cowardice of the most glaring kind. Everything, therefore, that tends to the preservation of a soldier's self-respect and his pride in his unit is a counteracting agency against degrading or dehumanising tendencies.

There was, moreover, an unconscious repression, on the part of the soldier himself, of the tendency to drop back into complete barbarism. He sang, and his repertoire of songs is illuminating. He hurled from it anything that hinted at the more ugly aspects of war, even when they were served up in the form of glory and heroic deeds. I am not sure, however, that this was so characteristic of the French soldier as it was of the British. If the British soldier sang about war at all, it was only to make a joke of it and of his own part in it, and somehow it generally happened that such songs were a parody upon some well-known ballad about home or some familiar hymn—songs which, despite the words, brought thoughts of home and the home surroundings before the mind. The songs which were most popular, too, at 'sing song' or Divisional Concert were those that had to do with home—doggerel verses which gave men the opportunity of singing that

The roses round the door  
Make me love mother more,

or which recorded the delight of being 'back in Michigan, down on the farm.' Tender emotion towards their homes and those within them was

evoked by songs like these, and it kept men from becoming altogether dehumanised. Sentiments have grown up around the home and around the very idea of the home, and emotions have been organised around that idea. McDougall has said in this connection that a sentiment "is not a fact or mode of experience, but a feature of the completely organised structure of the mind."<sup>1</sup> It enters as a strong and permanent force into a man's character, and tends to give colour to his whole outlook. There is a permanent quality in the operation of a sentiment, such as cannot be discovered in the case of those simpler emotional experiences which prompt to action when some primitive impulse has been aroused. The latter may be very violent in its operation while it lasts, but it passes with the removal of the object that has aroused it. The sentiments, on the other hand, are a permanent mental structure in which, as from a central nucleus, ramifications of an emotional and conative character run out in every direction, so that when the central nucleus is aroused the whole strength of the organised emotional and conative system of the sentiment is aroused with it. Thus love for father, mother, wife, or child, even for the very articles within the home and the surroundings in which it is set—love for any or all of these things is evoked within the sentiment of home by songs that speak of home. I have seen men from a battalion of the Devon Regiment raised to wild enthusiasm, for example, by the song 'Red Devon by the Sea.' Through the operation of such a sentiment there comes a shrinking from conditions which are so opposite from those that are visualised,

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 122.

and the prevention of the development of any sentiment favourable to sinking into them.

Other songs voiced a similar shrinking, notably one lugubrious ballad which expressed at the same time disgust towards the conditions of war and a yearning for those that might be experienced at home :

I want to go home—I want to go home.  
Jack Johnsons and shrapnel, they come down like rain :  
I don't want to go in the trenches again.  
I want to go over the sea,  
Where the Allemand can't snipe at me.  
Oh my !  
I don't want to die.  
I want to go home.

The sentiments revealed by such a song would have some effect in restraining the degrading tendencies of war.

How much or how little effect the sentiment of religion had in diminishing dehumanising tendencies it is difficult to say. It certainly had some effect on individual men all the time, and upon others for a longer or shorter period. In some cases it was just a link with home, perhaps a form of the home sentiment. In other cases it was a higher form of the crude sentiment of Fatalism which sooner or later was formed in relation to the war, and which was expressed in the formula, ' If your number is on a shell or a bullet, it will get you.' One has the feeling, however, that the conditions were not such as to give rise to the formation of religious sentiments in any ordinary acceptance of that term. Church parades were designed by the Army authorities for the preservation and increase of the moral of the troops, and in so far as they succeeded in this

## 100 A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

direction they had the effect of preserving from those dehumanising tendencies to which war conditions give rise. The conditions of life at the Front, however, did not favour the development of a religious sentiment. Such a sentiment upon analysis reveals a complex emotional system, into which fear, wonder, negative self-feeling, and gratitude enter. Given the idea of God as a Supreme, All-Powerful Being, there was nothing in the circumstances of war to excite in men's minds that fusing of negative self-feeling and wonder which is called admiration. At the Front, it was difficult to find wonder at any time. Negative self-feeling was, however, a common emotional state in circumstances which made one conscious of one's personal impotence and individual unimportance. Given a man in whom such a feeling was aroused in reference to some 'power not himself,' the sentiment into which it would become organised would be not religion in the accepted sense of the term, a mystical relationship of awe and reverence, but a Fatalism which tended towards complete indifference. I do not think that fear entered into such a sentiment, seeing that it was often brought into operation for the purpose of inhibiting fear. There could, therefore, be none of the emotion of awe which is one of the factors forming a religious sentiment. One man has told the writer how he sat in a shell-hole and saw himself as a very microscopic thing upon the face of the earth, such as, according to all laws of probability, no individual shell would be likely to hit. In the minds of such men laws of probability took the place of God. In a man of more aggressive tendency, the idea of an All-Powerful Deity

would arouse feelings of anger or even hatred in the presence of unnameable horrors, which he believed were under His control. Thus Studdart-Kennedy writes, "If God wills war, then I am not an atheist. I am an anti-theist. I am against God. I hate Him." <sup>1</sup>

Further, the fear that was aroused was not of a kind to become easily organised into a religious sentiment. It might possibly show itself in some kind of superstitious dread in the presence of some specific danger, but it would exhaust itself upon the immediate object of its excitement, and would not act as a controlling and constraining force against degrading tendencies. Thus a man might pray like an anchorite when he crouched in the midst of a universe that seemed to be falling to pieces in the final conflagration, and show himself to be anything but an anchorite when danger had passed away. The fear aroused is in such cases directed towards the immediate danger, and not towards a Supreme Being who is thought of as existing behind the danger. Further, even if a sentiment with God as its object be formed, it will not last, should fear be the solitary emotional disposition associated with it, for, as Professor McDougall teaches, "Any such sentiment is liable to die away for lack of stimulus, or if further relations are maintained with its object, to develop into a more complex organism." <sup>2</sup> Here one may perhaps find the explanation of the frequent deterioration of the religious sentiment at the Front, whereby it either became a sentiment of indifference towards God or developed into a contrary and hostile senti-

<sup>1</sup> *Lies*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 164.

ment through the incorporation of another emotional disposition, such as anger.

Most fatal of all to the growth of this sentiment—and in some cases to its very existence—was the absence from the mind of any tender emotion of gratitude, with the consequent absence of reverence. Where the religious sentiment continued to exist in any strength, it was probably due to some appreciation of deliverance from danger which was regarded as God-given and Providential. For the most part, however, the conditions were not such as to develop a strong sense of gratitude. Itself a very complex emotional state, reverence requires the awe which is composed of wonder, negative self-feeling, and fear to be intimately associated with the gratitude which is built up of tender emotion and negative self-feeling. The absence of any of these elemental dispositions from any sentiment formed about the idea of God will make reverence impossible.

It seems, then, that practically nothing of the emotional dispositions which become organised into the religious sentiment survived as an emotional system, except fear and negative self-feeling. This is true, at any rate, of a very great number of men. In the minds of the majority a sentiment of Fate took its place, organised around the idea of war's probabilities. It was, I think, a simple emotional disposition, namely, negative self-feeling, which was brought into association with the idea. And since stimuli for the arousing of that idea were never lacking, the sentiment was of an enduring character with those who held it, despite the fact that it involved only a solitary emotional disposition. It

was frequently brought into operation for the inhibiting of fear, but it was not a sentiment which could give much control over dehumanising tendencies. Indeed, in so far as it promoted the feeling that the individual did not matter, it must have had the very opposite effect. In many, perhaps in most men, then, this sentiment took the place of the sentiment of religion: and for the most part, it was not along the direct line of emotional appeal, but by indirect methods, such as the link with home, that religion succeeded in its humanising efforts.

It seems clear, however, that the operation of a sentiment of some kind was the chief, if it was not the only thing that kept men from lapsing into utter barbarism. Reference has already been made to two sentiments which played a part in the control of degrading tendencies—love of home and hatred of the whole ghastly circumstances of war. Together, these form a strong alliance against degradation. The question arises, however, why the existence of such sentiments did not produce a revolt from, and a refusal to face, the uglier conditions of life at the Front. A man hears or sings a song which excites the idea of his home, and there is released a flood of emotional dispositions which have become organised around that idea. He loves his home and all that makes it home for him, and he longs to be there again. There is a yearning towards it, an inward striving that he may get to it. Why does he not obey that prompting, and take the first opportunity of flight from conditions that he loathes and hates? Of course he may form a judgment that it would be impossible for him to escape, or

## 104 A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

that if escape were possible and he could get away, he might be caught later and would then be shot. There were times, however, when even such a judgment would have been no deterrent from desertion, when death itself would have been a relief. At such times it would probably be some sentiment of self-regard in some of its more complex forms which would act as a deterrent from instantaneous flight. Such a sentiment would take the form of self-respect or of *esprit de corps*.

A partial analysis of the sentiment of home will help toward an understanding of the manner in which control of conduct and the dispositions that issue in conduct is applied through its operation. When the thought of his home arises in a man's mind, it is not the idea of his home as an abstraction, but of his home with the man himself in it and surrounded by all that makes it dear to him. Home and family are a part of a man's larger self, and the emotional system organised around such objects is, therefore, an extension of his self-regarding sentiment, with the addition of tender emotion towards that part of the object which is not himself. He longs for his home, but there are those there whose approval he seeks, and whom he would be ashamed to face were he to prove himself a coward or a weakling by flight from what his fellows have to endure. Negative self-feeling discloses itself in his attitude of submission to the opinion of the home circle: positive self-feeling shows itself in the desire to be worthy of its approval. In so far as he is able to respond to these two emotional strivings there is a sense of satisfaction, for they are in process of being fulfilled, and thereby of releasing a great



force of affective-conative energy for the control of conduct. In their balance a man finds his self-respect. The writer has censored letters in which loss of regard for those at home has been found, and side by side with it loss of the man's own self-respect. On the other hand, a young officer who had been posted for duty in the line came to his chaplain one night and said, "You probably think I'm a pretty rotten type, padre, but if you can, I want you to write to my wife and tell her any good you know about me. I want her to have that letter, if anything happens to me." He had been showing some of the degrading tendencies of war, but home had made its appeal, and self-respect, with its fusion of positive and negative self-feeling, was beginning to assert its presence. A man might feel cheap and of no account many a time under war conditions, but even a letter from home, which aroused the home sentiment, enabled him to regain his self-respect as a strong emotional control over his actions.

A consideration of the operation of the sentiments under war conditions enables one to see how true is the position assigned to them by Professor McDougall. "In the absence of sentiments," he writes, "our emotional life would be mere chaos, without order, consistency, or continuity of any kind: and all our social relations and conduct, being based upon the emotions and their impulses, would be correspondingly chaotic, unpredictable, and unstable. It is only through the systematic organisation of the emotional dispositions in sentiments that the volitional control of the immediate promptings of the emotions is rendered possible. Again, our judgments of value and of merit are

rooted in our sentiments : and our moral principles have the same source, for they are formed by our judgments of moral value.”<sup>1</sup> In the cases to which reference has been made the above statement seems to be borne out by the facts. The immediate response to the whole environment of war prompted towards the relinquishing of all the tenets of external decency or personal morality, or to flee from the situation which gave rise to such promptings. Sentiments, however, of one kind or another arose to prevent these things. A man who held a position in Nigeria has told me that on one occasion he came across an official at a lonely outpost, who was in full evening-dress, dining in solitude on the night my friend met him. He did not expect anyone to dine with him that night, and very rarely did see anyone except blacks. The loneliness of his situation prompted him to cast off all the outward decencies of civilisation, but a strong sentiment of self-respect restrained him from ‘going black.’ The sentiments into which a man’s self-respect entered at the Front acted in a similar way in preserving his efficiency.

In the account which has just been given of the manner in which certain sentiments were brought into operation at the Front, use has been made of the word ‘idea.’ It becomes necessary to give a brief explanation of the meaning of this word, and of the inner connection between the idea of an object and the emotional system organised around it. The fact that one can think of objects such as the war, or the Army unit, or the home, or the Deity, whether they are physically present or not, suggests the

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 160.

existence of a special cognitive disposition corresponding to the object. Such a disposition is either innate or it has been developed as a result of experience of the object in question. Linked by association to it are certain other dispositions of an affective-conative character through which an interest in the object has been established. Around a nucleus consisting of a central brain pattern which has been formed through experience, there grows up a more elaborate system, in which other dispositions are linked together, not directly but by means of the central nucleus. That central nucleus is the 'idea' of the object or of the situation towards which a sentiment is directed: the whole system forms the mental structure of the sentiment itself. Thus, around a nucleus which corresponds to the object 'war,' there has grown up a sentiment of hatred which consists of an emotional system into which fear and anger and disgust have entered. If anything stirs that central nucleus, it will also arouse every constituent emotion in the sentiment.

It must be noted, however, that the mere idea of an object such as any of those mentioned has no driving force in itself. The idea which forms the nucleus of any sentiment is brought into being by affective-conative interests, and is linked with them by associations within the mind, the whole becoming a part of the mental structure. Control by sentiment is not, therefore, an intellectual control, but is due ultimately to the operation of certain affective-conative dispositions. The idea of a man's home, for example, may contain nothing that will link it with an emotional system favourable to the control of degrading tendencies. There are men so con-

stituted, or their experience may be such, that the idea of home leaves them quite unmoved, because they have no tender feelings with regard to it. They have, perhaps, a sentiment of indifference or of hatred towards their home, and the idea will, therefore, excite only those emotional dispositions through whose operation it was originally formed, and with which it is associatively linked. It will touch no source of energy in self-respect or the tender emotion of love. It seems clear, then, that the value of a sentiment for the control of conduct and the development of character depends not upon the idea that is aroused, but upon the quality of those emotional and conative dispositions that have been organised around it.

Two further questions remain for consideration in reference to the great control of conduct which is exercised by the sentiments. It has been noticed that certain sentiments had the effect of neutralising to some extent the dispositions aroused by the dehumanising conditions of war. Disgust towards the whole conditions of war and the love of home acted in this way, forming checks upon any tendency to acquiesce, and to settle down complacently under dehumanising conditions of life. These are sentiments which arouse a disposition to fly from the whole circumstance of war, and yet we found that this tendency was controlled by a sentiment of self-respect which was intimately associated with the sentiment of home. The question arises, what gave the former sentiments their power of control over the disposition to sink to a merely animal level, and, further, what gave the sentiment of self-regard its restraining power over the disposition to with-

draw from the conditions of war, arising from the joint influence of disgust towards them and a yearning for home ?

As to the former portion of this question, one answer would seem to be that the affective-conative dispositions within a sentiment are organised, while other affective-conative dispositions are only evoked in response to specific stimuli, and pass away when the stimuli are removed : they are quite unorganised. Because of the law of habit the psychic flow, the stream of psychic energy passes more easily along a channel consisting of a system of dispositions which have become so organised that they are habitually evoked together. Simple emotional dispositions which are aroused in direct response to a specific situation are very volatile, and the least alteration in the situation permits their operation to disappear from the level of conscious mental life. I have seen men in circumstances which brought anger to their eyes and bitter words to their lips : yet in the course of an hour or less they had altered completely under the influence of a fire and a few cups of tea. Had the situation not changed they would probably have done something desperate, or have sunk down into a dull, lethargic acquiescence towards their circumstances. It was only when men were exposed to some situation for too long a period that their emotional dispositions tended to become organised into a sentiment. As such sentiments, however, did not tend towards efficiency, so far as the exigencies of warfare permitted, no opportunity was given for their formation. I have seen resentment towards some of the conditions of training camp life in Etaples become organised into a

sentiment of hatred which promoted revolt and consequent temporary loss of efficiency. That the situation might be changed as speedily as possible, Y.M.C.A. huts and canteens were pushed far into the battle area. However much men may have tended to become dehumanised in the situation outside, once more they grew human in the new situation presented to them there. So far as was possible, the individual man found his situation altered constantly. Periods of duty in the line alternated with periods of rest in Divisional billets a few miles further back, and at the conclusion of a certain number of weeks upon a certain sector of a Divisional front the entire Brigade would perhaps take over another sector of the same front. Eventually the entire Division would be taken out and transferred to an entirely fresh Divisional front. This, at any rate, was the system that prevailed in France for a considerable time. Thus the psychic flow which gave rise to emotional experiences in response to a given situation was being constantly interrupted. On the other hand, when a sentiment became organised around the idea of some object, its entire affective-conative disposition became a relatively permanent part of the mental structure. Any associated area within the sentiment became a means of arousing its entire emotional system. Habit and experience had cut channels along which the psychic stream would flow in a relatively uninterrupted fashion.

A further explanation would seem to be that any impulse within an organised system of emotions derives increased energy from the remaining members of the complex system of which it is a part. Whereas, any simple emotional disposition or aggregate of

dispositions only displays the amount of energy with which it is innately endowed. "It would seem," writes Professor McDougall, "that any emotion excited within the system of any complex sentiment acquires an increased intensity, and its impulse an additional energy from its membership in the system, an increase of energy which is greater the larger the number of dispositions comprised within the system."<sup>1</sup> In war, very strong, because very fundamental, impulses are aroused, for beneath the thin veneer of civilisation there lurks the primitive savage man: yet other impulses no more fundamental, perhaps not even so fundamental, can master them, seemingly through nothing except the increased power which organisation into a system has given them.

It is from the principle enunciated above that we get our explanation of the power of control exercised by the self-regarding sentiment over the tendency to flight evoked through the operation of a sentiment of disgust towards the conditions of warfare, reinforced by that of love for home. Because of the self-regard that entered into the sentiment of home, men were sometimes restrained from a complete *sauve qui peut*. In its more extended forms the sentiment of self-regard has tremendous restraining power. In a footnote bearing upon the quotation given above, Professor McDougall says, "For the same reason other sentiments of this type resulting from the fusion of the self-regarding sentiment with the love of an object other than the self (of which patriotism is the most striking example) acquire their power of supplying dominant or extremely

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 166.

powerful motives.”<sup>1</sup> The impulse to escape from conditions which provoke disgust and loathing, even when in alliance with the yearning for home, has small chance of dominance when confronted with the self-regard or self-respect involved in the latter sentiment, for through this the whole force and energy of the self is aroused.

Similarly, the degrading consequences of a sentiment of Fatalism were held in check to some extent by the operation of self-regard in some of its forms. Organised around the idea of probabilities, Fatalism seems to rest upon the solitary emotional disposition of submission. Its impulse is in the direction of accepting things as they are and giving up individual effort in the face of tremendous external forces, which are uncontrollable by the individual, and of which the outcome is simply incalculable. On the other hand, into any of the sentiments of self-regard there enter a large number of emotional dispositions, intimately organised around that most permanent of all ideas, the self, and reacting upon environment with the whole strength of a man's conative energy. A man identifies himself with his Army unit, his home, his country. He has fought with his unit, he has shared its victories, its praise, its discomforts, and its dangers. He has added something of himself to this object of his regard, and to that extent his self-regarding sentiment becomes a part of the more extended sentiment of *esprit de corps*. He is fighting for his country and his home: he is giving something of himself to them, just as he gave something of himself to them in other days. Whatever emotional dispositions are

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 166 (note).



excited by these objects will be increased in intensity and their impulse increased in energy by the presence of the self-regarding sentiment. The conative energy of the entire self will flow through each of the dispositions which are in organised relation to the idea of the object with which a man identifies himself: and the greater the number of such dispositions the stronger will be the emotional experience and the impulsive energy. To these things is added the further fact that tender emotion for any object towards which the self-regarding sentiment is extended infuses with its own energy that which is already operative, and intensifies it. In this way the sentiment of self-regard in any of its extensions tended to subdue the impulses which arose through the presence of such sentiments as Fatalism, loathing for the conditions of warfare, and the yearning for home and the home surroundings.

At the level of consciousness such controlling sentiments are due to what Donald Hankey calls 'a sense of the dramatic.' "Probably," he writes, "there is no one to whom this saving grace is more essential than to the fighting soldier, especially in winter. Every detail of his life is sordid and uncomfortable. His feet are always damp and cold. He is plastered with mud from head to foot. His clothes cling to him like a wet blanket. He is filthy and cannot get clean. His food is beastly. He has no prospect of anything that a civilian would call decent comfort unless he gets ill or wounded. There is no one to sympathise with his plight or to call him a hero. If he has no sense of the dramatic, if his horizon is bounded by the sheer, material discomfort and filth which surround him, he will

sink to the level of the beast, lose his discipline and self-respect, and spend his days and nights in making himself and everyone else as miserable as possible by his incessant grumbling and ill-humour." A sense of the dramatic, however, is nothing except the ability to hold in the focus of consciousness an image of something, the idea which is the nucleus of an organised emotional system—in other words, a sentiment.

## VI

### COURAGE

It has been said that 'the beauty of a fine action is like the bloom of a wild flower, elusive, mystical. It will not survive the touch of the hot greasy hands that would pluck the flower from its roots and hawk it in the streets.' One has the feeling that any attempt to analyse courage deserves the same criticism: there seems to be something ungracious about such an analysis. Yet courage is the central factor in warfare, and its explanation must, therefore, be a central problem for any psychological examination of war experiences, since it lies at the root of endurance and final success in war.

In an examination of courage we seem to be concerned with a study of the will, or of what may be regarded as the nucleus of the will at various levels of intelligent control. There is, first of all, the courage that is a purely animal response to a specific physical environment. It is the outcome of a purely instinctive impulse. It is devoid of any consciousness of inner conflict. It is almost, if not altogether, devoid of self-consciousness. Some great conative disposition with a strongly emotional tendency is aroused, and sweeps away all intellectual control. In a great battle courage of this kind was general. Anger blazed within the eyes, and the

out-thrust jaw and turned-back lips showed the presence of impulse that was purely animal in its nature. Civilised man normally has such an impulse under control by reason of moral tradition and intellectual development, but in war its existence as a great conative force can be clearly seen. Reference has been made to the development of the 'bayonet spirit' in the young soldier. It was developed in order to release a primitive impulse to kill. In one case which I heard discussed, a young fellow was found after a battle in a death grip with a German twice his size, and with his teeth firmly set in his enemy's throat. In the height of a battle courage of this kind would be reinforced by the presence of other men who were displaying by face and voice the presence of the same crude impulse.

There were, however, times when men showed a similar immunity from fear when no such emotional state could be observed. Probably there was something abnormal about such men. Under certain conditions animal courage is a perfectly normal experience, and will transform the most timid into fighting demons. The anger which makes men 'see red' will do this, and arouse the primitive man that lives in everyone. When a man leaves the shelter of a communication trench, however, and in broad daylight walks across the open within sight of the enemy, for no better reason than to avoid a difficult and intricate bit of trench system, there would seem to be something abnormal about his state of mind. The man who did this is still alive. Perhaps it was the brazen and surprising character of his behaviour that saved him from instant death. He was not an imaginative man, however, and I do not think

that any idea of that kind controlled his action. It may have been due to the self-assertion of bravado, but was more probably due to lack of imagination. Men of this type must have been comparatively few, and their increase was not encouraged by Army Regulations. If courage of any kind was present in such behaviour, it did not rise above the level of an animal impulse to arrive at the object of desire—in this case food—without reflection as to means or imagination about possible obstacles.

On an animal level, too, are those actions which may be said to be due to what has been called 'the courage of despair.' Men have gone into some position in which they can do nothing except surrender or make the attempt to cut themselves out. Either action will be conditioned by a primitive life-impulse, the difference in behaviour being due to the mental state by which that impulse is coloured. If there seems to be no possibility of escape, granted that there is any opportunity for reflection, surrender will doubtless follow, unless the system of forces organised within some powerful conflicting sentiment is able to control the more primitive impulse. A great personal pride or pride in the unit to which one belonged would, and often did, exercise such a control. If, however, there seems to be the possibility of escape by resolute action, the life-impulse will carry the men through all that follows. We may imagine them starting to fight their way through opposing ranks, their minds coloured by hope, but the hope grows less and less, until at last they fight with the blind courage of despair. The primitive impulse to live which has carried them on is now probably reinforced by the presence of an

equally primitive fear or anger, and under the sway of this double impulse they will fight on until they are free or the last man has fallen. Nothing will put an end to such an impulse, once it has taken over control, except death, or utter exhaustion, or relief from the situation in which it has been aroused. Different states of mind, different intellectual conditions, may be excited by variations in the circumstances in which the original impulse seeks to obtain its object, but these do not tap fresh sources of impulsive energy: they merely furnish conditions of thought under which the original impulse finds greater or less ease of expression. In the final stage of its operation, when despair has been reached, and yet the men fight on, it is probable that they are scarcely conscious, and that a state has been achieved which approximates to what Stout calls 'anoetic sentience' or thoughtless feeling. Certainly, the feeling mass is very great, while action seems to be practically automatic.

In a letter written immediately after the event in 1915, an officer in a Mining Company of the Royal Engineers gave me such details as he could remember of an experience which seems to display this 'courage of despair.' He and the men with him were entombed in one of his own mine-galleries through the explosion of a counter-mine. Fifty yards of the mine-gallery fell, cutting them off from the outer world. As soon as they had recovered consciousness after the shock of the explosion, they began to dig themselves out, using only their hands against the mass of fallen earth. Hope coloured their mental state at this stage. There was the possibility that the gallery had not fallen along its

entire length, and the further possibility that willing hands were at that moment actually engaged in digging towards them. Mr. Shand considers that hope is itself an emotional system with its own conative disposition, which is capable of being added to and of reinforcing the energy of some original impulse. But, as Professor McDougall points out, "We hope always for the attainment of some end which we desire or aim at from some other motive than hope."<sup>1</sup> Hope merely supplies the conditions under which that original motive or impulse can work without much check to its operation. It seems no distortion of the fact, then, to say that it was not hope but the life-impulse itself which gave force to the efforts of these men. Soon, however, anxious thoughts arose from the very greatness of their task. The path to the satisfaction of the impulse was not a smooth one. They were making small progress, and no sound of digging could be heard from the other end of the tunnel. Under anxiety, however, their efforts did not relax: if anything, they increased. A certain amount of anger was perhaps added to the force of the original impulse, anger against the obstacle, anger against their comrades who, they felt, should have reached them by that time with their better equipment. Probably at this point a primitive fear was also adding itself to the effort to escape. Above all, the end in view, namely, relief, and the means to its attainment are brought more vividly into consciousness by the difficulty of attainment, and the conative flow is thereby increased. It was about this time that they discovered a broken shovel, and

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 432.

hope, with its pleasurable anticipation of escape, revived. Hope further increased their efforts at this stage under the operation of the principle that pleasure adds force to the activities which it qualifies, while pain diminishes it. For hours, that seemed like days, they worked in the dark, without food or water, without proper tools, and with torn nails and bleeding fingers, until every other feeling gave place to despair and a kind of madness seized them. At the end of thirty-six hours they emerged, to find that an enemy attack had been in operation during their imprisonment. By this time, my friend admits, he was practically insane, for he insisted on invading the opposite trenches in search of three of his men who had been taken prisoners during the attack. He tried to do this mad thing, but collapsed in 'no-man's-land,' from which he had himself to be brought in during the night.

It seems clear that the courage here displayed is due to a single original impulse which supplied the motive power from first to last, reinforced, perhaps, at times by the operation of those conative tendencies which are expressed in anger and fear.

First, there is the stage at which the men came to the self-conscious decision to dig themselves out under the pressure of a primitive will-to-live : second, there comes a stage which still shows self-consciousness, but it is not highly developed, for it is the changing mental conditions brought about through experience of the external circumstances which holds the foreground and colours the original impulse as it reaches consciousness : finally, in their despair, a kind of Berserk rage lays hold upon the men, all self-conscious control is lost, and probably even the



conscious desire to live is cast aside. Whether consciously or unconsciously present, however, it seems to have been the original impulse of a primitive life-force which carried the men forward at every stage.

A description of the courage which is active in such an experience, and an analysis of its development helps us to reach a conclusion with regard to the opposed views of Mr. Shand and Dr. McDougall on what the former calls 'the emotions of desire,' and the latter 'the derived emotions.' Shand considers that the emotional state covered by the word 'despair' and the effort which follows its excitement are due to an independent complex emotional system. McDougall, on the other hand, sees no need to postulate any such system, holding rather that the intellectual conditions produced by some changing situation in which an original impulse works, supply a sufficient explanation of the increase of effort which is to be found in certain forms of despair. He teaches that in such emotional states as hope, anxiety, and despair, there is nothing operative except an original impulse or desire, coloured by a feeling-tone which corresponds to the conditions under which it works. If anything new enters into these states, it is not a new emotional system which adds its energy to the original impulse, but a new intellectual appreciation of the situation. In the case under consideration the original impulse was the desire for life. As the situation unfolded itself, thoughts of various kinds surrounded this impulse with an atmosphere favourable or unfavourable to its operation. Thoughts favourable to the development of a pleasurable feeling-tone—such as the anticipation of success—tend to promote effort

and to increase it, without the operation of additional affective-conative tendencies: thoughts that arise to obstruct desire—such as the anticipation of failure—tend to narrow the range of consciousness, and thereby to reinforce both the original desire and the effort after its satisfaction. In the case just mentioned we have seen the consequences of both varieties of thought as the mind reacted towards variations in the situation which had evoked the original impulse. There was a pleasurable feeling-tone in the anticipation of success, such as tended to sustain effort and to enable the original life-impulse to operate freely. This was the stage of hope. Subsequently thoughts of a more gloomy character intervene. The difficulty of getting free, and the inadequacy of the means for the attainment of that end, supply the condition necessary for the operation of what Professor McDougall calls 'a fundamental law of all impulse,' namely, that 'obstruction leads to more explicit definition of the end and of the means to it, brings the conative process more vividly into consciousness,' and thus 'restrains us from all unnecessary dispersion of our energies.'<sup>1</sup> Such an obstruction of desire arises at the point where anxiety is shown, and through the narrowing of consciousness an increase of energy is supplied within the original impulse. In the final state, when despair is reached, there is nothing whatever of pleasurable feeling-tone in the operation of the impulse, and the tendency would be to abandon all effort and to lie down and die, but the obstruction is so great that the focus of consciousness is narrowed down to a mere pin-point,

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 434.

and upon that pin-point of consciousness all effort is directed. The pin-point of consciousness vanishes, perhaps, at the very end, and a wild, uncontrolled release of primitive conative energy results. Mad anger and mad fear will give strength to a man in his despair, such as he would never experience in his sanity.

At a higher, because more self-conscious level, is the courage which is due to the operation of some sentiment. At this level a man can usually tell what gave him courage, by a reference to the sentiment from which it has derived its energy. It is still impulsive, however, for it is not the idea of the object around which the affective-conative system is organised, but the system itself which gives this kind of courage its energy, and if no such system is linked to the idea as a part of the mental structure, courage will not result. Such a courageous act is the one recorded by Major A. Corbett-Smith. "One man, at least, I knew," he writes, "(I never learned his name) who, at the tears of two tiny mites, clambered into the ruins of a burning out-house then being shelled, to fetch out something they wanted, he could not understand what. He found a terror-stricken cat and brought it out safely. No, not pussy, something else as well. Back he went again, and after a little search discovered on the floor in a corner a wicker cage, in it a blackbird. Yes, that was it. And, oh, the joy of the girl mite in finding it still alive. 'Well, you see, sir,' he said afterwards, 'I've got two kiddies the image of them, and it was no trouble, anyway.'"<sup>1</sup>

Here we can discover the operation of a sentiment

<sup>1</sup> *The Retreat from Mons*, p. 107.

which has been organised around the idea of his own children, and an extension given to it so that its tender qualities and its impulse to protect from sorrow were directed towards these other children. Another man might have had children of whom these two reminded him, but if he had no sentiment of the kind indicated, the idea of his children would have been unable to prompt him to act in the same courageous way. Some other sentiment might affect him, but not that one.

The same level of courage was shown, I think, in an action through which a certain lion-hearted chaplain regained his 'nerve,' which he had temporarily lost. The ground was being literally scorched with bursting shells, when he said to the officer beside whom he was crouched that if the shelling did not cease he would break up—this from a man who was three times decorated for outstanding acts of gallantry. Then the thought of the men around him came to him, and sent him out to give them such cheer as he could in a situation which was as bad, if not worse than his own. Probably, there was a great narrowing of the field of consciousness brought about by the difficulty of the thing he had set out to do, resulting in the removal of his attention from those things that were breaking his nerve. There was, however, more than this. The men were from his own home neighbourhood, men whom he had known intimately, men with whom he had lived, and whose dangers and discomforts he had shared for a long time, and for whom he had a great affection and respect. When he was describing the occasion to me, it was this affectionate element in his sentiment for the

men that he emphasised. I asked him if there would not have been the same result in the restoration of his nerve had the men been complete strangers. His reply was that he was sure he would never have stirred from where he was that night for the sake of any men except his own. Here is the operation of a sentiment which had grown up around the men of his own battalion. Upon his own evidence it was the presence of such a sentiment alone that gave him power to overcome his instinctive fear and to enable him to leave a place of comparative security. I think, however, that the sentiment associated with his own self-respect was also operative, that it was, indeed, the presence of such a sentiment that impelled him to seek a means for the recovery of his courage, and that some area of association within that sentiment aroused the sentiment of regard for the men with whom he had come to identify himself in a peculiarly intimate way.

In the following instance, a sentiment of hatred is shown to be the impulsive force behind a courageous action. A man went out alone one night, loaded with bombs, and attacked a German machine-gun nest single-handed. When asked about it, he said that he had done it because he wanted revenge against the men who had killed his brother. On the other hand, a certain soldier gained the V.C. for a courageous deed which was the outcome of a sentiment of affection for his platoon officer. This officer was his fellow-townsmen, and was probably bound up from that cause with the man's own idea of himself. During the Battle of the Somme the man went out seven times to look for this officer, who had been reported as wounded.

He was unable to find him, but on each occasion he carried in a wounded comrade. Pity for some of those whom he found will account for the men with whom he returned, but the whole courageous operation was initiated and governed by regard for the man's officer. It was to look for and to carry him back that he went out on each occasion. Had he not possessed a sentiment of this kind, organised around the idea of his platoon commander, the courage manifested would have been inoperative. It was, therefore, not the mere idea of his officer—such an idea would have had very different results in certain cases—but the emotional system of impulses organised around that idea which prompted the man's courageous act.

On a still higher level of self-consciousness is such an action as that recorded of Captain the Hon. Francis Grenfell, at the battle of Mons, when with the remnant of the 9th Lancers he rescued the guns of the 119th Battery R.F.A., whose gun detachments had been cut to pieces. The circumstances of the action have been often described. Following a charge by the Lancers against an unbroken enemy position, in front of which two belts of wire were found to be still intact, Captain Grenfell brought the survivors of his regiment into shelter behind a railway-embankment. "In the shelter of the embankment," writes John Buchan, "was a Battery Commander and some dozen gunners, whose battery—the 119th of the Royal Field Artillery—had been put out of action by the German shells, with the loss of most of its men. Captain Grenfell, though severely wounded by shrapnel in the head and leg, determined to save

the guns, and rode out to see if there was an exit for them in the direction of the British main position. Beyond the derelict guns he discovered a way of retreat, and was compelled to return at a walking pace through an inferno of shot and shell, that the risk might be minimised in the sight of his men. Once under the embankment again, he called for volunteers from the Lancers, and reminded them that the 9th had saved a battery at Maiwand, and in South Africa had never failed the gunners. Every man responded to the call." <sup>1</sup>

This is a very illuminating account of the action from a psychological standpoint. We find indications of self-conscious will and purpose in the words 'that the risk might be minimised in the eyes of his men,' used in reference to him walking his horse through the shell-fire, instead of galloping it. Other things, however, are shown in addition to this. The traditions of his regiment are in his thoughts, and spring to his lips in the method of his appeal for volunteers. There is pride in his regiment and the operation of a sentiment of *esprit de corps*, which goes out not only towards it, but towards the other units of the Army. He will not endure that the depleted remnant of the battery should fall into enemy hands, nor that the guns should become trophies of victory over an army with which he and his men are identified. Giving unity to these other sentiments there is doubtless Captain Grenfell's pride of race. *Noblesse oblige* is a great unifying sentiment in the minds of many men, and becomes operative in more than one walk of life. The son of a noble family shows it, doubtless, in actions

<sup>1</sup> *The History of the War* (First Edition), vol. ii. p. 43.

such as the one recorded, but many a man or woman of more humble lineage has shown it too. In the case of such a man as Captain Grenfell, the immediate action was impulsive, no doubt, but it was also something more than impulsive. It was due, probably, not so much to one definite act of will as to that character which had been formed by many individual acts of will. That character has been summed up in these words, 'gallant soldier, brilliant sportsman, graceful poet, and true lover of nature, a genuine statesman in his dealings with men, and the most loyal of friends.' Great egoistic and great altruistic sentiments become operative in the case of a man like this, but they are harmonised. The strong, egoistic, self-assertive instincts of the soldier and the sportsman are harmonised through the sentiment of *noblesse oblige* with those altruistic motives which lie behind courageous sacrifice for the sake of a dozen men. Many other men have doubtless the same or similar egoistic and altruistic sentiments developed to an equally high pitch, but they may not prompt to equally courageous action through lack of some harmonising sentiment. Conflicting sentiments require to be organised into a harmonious whole for the development of a strong, courageous character. In the case under consideration, I attribute the organising element to the presence of what I have called a sentiment of *noblesse oblige*. It is an elaboration of the self-regarding sentiment, and is in essence a sentiment of self-respect. Captain Grenfell represented a class. He identified himself with it in respect of its traditions, its conduct in previous wars and difficult situations. He has memories of how members of



his own family and of families associated with his own have acted. It is unlikely that he could have given a detailed account of all that entered into this sentiment; still, it gave him his character through its long operation, and he would have lost his self-respect had he defied it. It is this character which furnishes him with ideals of conduct in the presence of any given situation. Through the unifying force of this sentiment ideals of conduct are formed, and an impulse given towards realising them in action. As Professor McDougall puts it, "The impulse of self-assertion organised within the sentiment of self-respect gives rise to a strong desire to realise (the) ideal under all circumstances."<sup>1</sup> It seems clear, then, that in the higher forms of courage the dispositions within self-regard furnish the controlling and harmonising power over those sentiments which promote its operation.

In the illustrations of courage which have been given, there is nothing which inevitably indicates a conscious choice between motives and a struggle in which some weaker motive gained the victory over one that was naturally stronger. In one case, such a struggle may have taken place—namely, when the chaplain whose nerve was breaking down under shell-fire decided to go among the men of his battalion, that he might cheer them in the circumstances which he found so hard to endure. There may have been a hard choice between egoistic impulses which prompted him to take cover and to stay there, and altruistic impulses which prompted him to go and see what he could do for his men. I think, however, that in his case it was the stronger

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, p. 253.

motive that dominated the situation as soon as the idea of his men under their terrible ordeal presented itself to him. In other words, his sentiment of regard for his men was stronger than his sentiment of regard for himself. There were, however, many men who were conscious of this hard choice, and whose courage consisted in making the choice and in acting against the sway of those strong self-protective impulses which lie at the very foundation of all life. The highest form of courage is that which involves this consciousness of conflict and effort, issuing in the conquest of some motive which is naturally strong by one that is naturally much weaker. The whole process is truly volitional, for as the late Professor William James says, "Effort of attention is . . . the essential phenomenon of will." There is a strong motive of fear in operation, and the instinct of flight or concealment is active. A man lies grovelling and powerless in some place of comparative safety, but duty demands that he should be up and doing. How is he to bring himself to attend to the idea of his duty in such a way as to inhibit the fear motive which is making him useless? With him, fear is undoubtedly the stronger motive, yet in most cases fear is thrust aside by an act of will, or at any rate put into a position of subjection. One man has told me of his experience during the first few days after he had gone up the line, when he was in terror of the continuous stream of shells that fell around him. At night he could do nothing but lie and quake, while the crash and roar of exploding shells went on over the dug-out where he was. One night, he says, he took himself in hand. He considered that he was in no worse position


than the men around him, and insisted that what they could endure, he would endure. He summoned the whole strength of his manhood to his aid, feeling that if he lived, he would be ashamed to stand before his fellow-men, a coward, and that if he died, he would be ashamed to come before his Maker, a coward. His self-respect was the triumphant factor that entered into the act of will that put fear away from him. I believe that most men who have acted during the war with any degree of courage would, if they could be made talk about it, admit that some such motive was operative in their case. The highest level of courage is found in this moral courage, for it involves complete self-consciousness and action against the line of greatest resistance. Some ideal of conduct has come into opposition with a strong natural propensity, and impulse for impulse, a strong natural propensity is always more powerful than any ideal. The natural propensity which prompts one to keep out of danger or to save one's life is always stronger than the ideals which prompt to courageous action. Yet in many cases the weaker impulse was victorious. Professor James explains this anomaly by saying that it is the effort of the will, added to the weaker motive, which gives it the additional strength. He does not, however, explain what the will is in itself, leaving the impression that it is a kind of *deus ex machina* which comes into operation in some mysterious way and from some mysterious habitat. Professor McDougall has made a very useful suggestion, and one that seems to be borne out by the account which has been given of courage at different levels, when he attributes the increase of energy to the operation

## 132 A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

of the self-regarding sentiment. Here is a sentiment which draws its conative impulses from many dispositions. Every sentiment has many conative dispositions organised within it, but the sentiment of self-regard has most of all. It can, in fact, arouse the whole organised system of conative forces which are constitutive of the self. Any sentiment into which the idea of the self enters in any degree releases to that extent the system of conative dispositions which is organised about the idea of self. In the case of any conflict of motive, any such sentiment thrown into the balance will inevitably lead to victory on the part of that disposition on whose side it is energised, and will produce what is known as an act of will. No new force is brought into operation, but simply a conjunction of conations, rendered possible by the organisation of innate dispositions, and of those acquired during the lifetime of the individual by differentiation from the innate dispositions. In the account which has been given of the operation of courage at different levels of intellectual control, there seems to be no clearly drawn line of demarcation between one level and the next. We begin with simple, unreflective animal impulse, and we reach eventually the highest level of moral choice, but at no point does there seem to be the evidence of anything except innate impulse, more or less organised, within that scale. If this be a true account of courage, it seems clear that will does not differ in kind from other conations, but only in degree of expression, and that this increased degree of expression is to be accounted for through the operation of the self-regarding sentiment.

## VII

### THE UNCONSCIOUS MIND

OF recent years psychology has been laying an ever-increasing emphasis upon the operation of what has been called 'the unconscious' or 'the sub-conscious' mind. The reality of such an area of mental existence and influence has long been recognised by psychologists. Even as far back as the time of Leibnitz it was recognised that there is an intimate connection between conscious life and unconscious elements upon which it rests. It is, however, becoming more and more clearly seen that there is a scientific basis for this conception. Normally one is not conscious of the mental processes by which the vital functions are controlled: yet one finds, perhaps, that there is a very direct and intimate connection between conscious worries and the state of one's bodily health. On the other hand, the investigations of Dr. Freud, of Vienna, and Dr. Jung, of Zurich, have been making it clear that there are unconscious 'worries' which have a very close relation to conscious life. 

At the very outset, however, we are faced with the difficulty of definition. Even Jung, who has made this realm so peculiarly his own, is unwilling to venture beyond the bare statement that the unconscious is "the sum of all psychical processes

below the threshold of consciousness":<sup>1</sup> a definition which is tantamount to saying that the unconscious is—the unconscious. It is probable that the state of our knowledge is such that no exact definition is possible at present.

There are some things, however, concerning which Jung is very definite, namely, the account he gives of the contents of the unconscious. These consist, he says, of repressed material which the conscious mind is unwilling to use and of all psychic material which does not reach the threshold of consciousness, both subliminal sense perceptions and all material which has not yet reached the level of consciousness, primitive forces which may yet enter into the content of conscious life. He further holds that this unconscious realm is very far from being inactive, but is engaged with processes within itself which co-ordinate with consciousness and colour it.<sup>2</sup> It is with some of these contents of the unconscious that we shall be concerned in this chapter.

When one is attending to any object which lies in the focus of consciousness, there is always a large number of other objects which lie out towards the margin of the field of consciousness, and even beyond it. They are all, however, producing their effect upon the total experience, for we may discover that some train of thought has been initiated by something that we did not consciously notice. At any moment, too, one's attention may be so much increased in relation to the central object of interest that all other things may become extra-marginal. Yet a few days later, or many months later, the

<sup>1</sup> *Analytical Psychology* (2nd Edition), p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 446.

whole experience may be brought back to memory, and elements in the total experience revived of which one was, perhaps, not aware at the time. A note of music, a chance word, a wisp of mist upon the landscape may suffice to bring into consciousness things that have been lying in the unconscious mind. Often a wisp of winter mist hanging among bare trees upon the skyline, or a broad expanse of bog-land running out to meet a dim, low-lying ridge of hills, has transported the writer into tracts of shell-scarred country and forgotten battle-scenes. To say that this is due to association by similarity explains nothing. It does not explain why one particular set of experiences happens to be revived, while others with far more bearing upon the occupation of the moment remain dormant. There is in the experience evidently a background of interest, of readiness to accept the association. Perhaps the very effort to forget some of the things one has seen has only added a greater interest to them. Or perhaps some element in the primitive unconscious furnishes the interest that is needed for revival. "We shall want to remember," says *The Student in Arms*, "how adversity made men unselfish, and pain found them tender, and danger found them brave, and loyalty made them heroic." One is not conscious for the most part of this blend of self-assertive pride with respect for those in whom such things were found. It has formed, however, an unconscious background of interest which influences one's conscious experience from time to time, and perhaps more frequently than one imagines.

It is upon this inter-relation between the conscious

and the unconscious aspects of mind that present-day psychology is laying the emphasis, and there seems to be no doubt that unconscious processes exercise a tremendous influence upon conscious life. The unconscious mind is no longer regarded as a mere treasure house of past experiences and stored memories, but as a workshop in which many of our most important mental operations are being performed. "The natives of the unconscious hinterland," Miss Bradby writes, "are not completely cut off from consciousness. It is their pressure reinforcing conscious motives which turns the scale and determines our action."<sup>1</sup> So also Professor William James: writing of the subconscious, he says, "It is an exhaustless fountain head, ever pouring out fresh conceptions as from some unseen laboratory, the abode of everything that is latent, the reservoir of everything that passes unrecorded and unobserved. It contains, for example, such things as all our momentarily inactive memories, and it harbours the springs of all our obscurely motivated passions, impulses, likes, dislikes, and prejudices: our intentions, hypotheses, fancies, superstitions, persuasions, convictions, and in general all our non-rational operations come from it. It is the source of our dreams, and apparently they may return to it. In it arise whatever mystical experiences we may have, and our automatism, sensory or motor: our life in hypnotic or hypnoid conditions, if we are subject to such conditions: our delusions, fancies, ideas, and hysterical accidents, if we are hysteric subjects."<sup>2</sup> The system of innate

<sup>1</sup> Oxford Medical Publications, *Psycho-Analysis*, p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 483.



dispositions which forms the basis of all our thinking and acting, and all their modifications, have their habitat in the unconscious. They show their presence in consciousness when they are needed, but a great part of our most important activity is carried on under the control of the unconscious and without conscious direction or effort. Army discipline, for example, developed a large number of secondary automatic actions. Men controlled the length of their stride when marching without conscious effort, and on long marches have even been known to keep marching in their ranks while sound asleep. The complicated movement of hands and arms and body and feet attending an armed sentry's salute, the movements necessitated in throwing a 'Mills's bomb,' and many other actions, were largely automatic and unconscious. The writer knows a soldier who when home on leave created much amusement, and gained a quite undeserved reputation for 'swank,' by throwing himself flat on the ground one very muddy day without a moment's hesitation, as he was passing a saw-mill: a log had just been brought under the saw at the moment of his passing, and the sound that followed was exactly like that of an approaching shell. At the time he was not thinking about the war or of anything connected with it, and his action seems to have been due to nothing except unconscious control.

Judging by such things, it would seem to be true that the unconscious mind is not merely a store-house of memories, but that mental processes governing nice adjustments of action to environment are carried on within the sphere of its operation.

## 138     A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

It is likely that such processes exist for the purpose of economising psychic energy, those matters being confined to the region of the unconscious which are most usefully kept there, in order that the conscious mind may be relieved of work to that extent, and may thus be able the more readily to produce those further adaptations of thought and action which the environment demands.

The influence of unconscious mind upon conscious thought may also be seen in the credulity which characterised men in the Army on active service, and the frequent 'camp rumours' which flew around like wild-fire, and which were generally accepted as truth. A ration party hears at the watering point that men further back have heard the sound of firing in the English Channel. Someone passes the word on to the Quartermaster-Sergeant in polite conversation, who remarks to someone else who is just in from the front line that he has just had news of a great battle in the North Sea. By the time the story gets to the front line troops, it is definitely known that the German fleet has at last come out and has been wiped off the sea, or, if that particular section of the line has had little ground for optimism owing to many casualties and delayed leave and a shortage of rations, the news may have assumed a different form, and it will be definitely known that the British fleet has suffered a severe disaster. And after a long spell in an unwholesome part of the line rumours will spring up regarding the future activities of the Division: they are to go back for special intensive training in preparation for a big scrap: they are going to the Base to refit: they are to be sent to Italy or Salonica, or anywhere

except back to the place they have been in. The unconscious mind adds to or takes away from some chance statement, or even treats its hopes as realities, and interprets these things in accordance with a disposition which is to be found there. Writing of belief, S. S. Brierley says, "We tend to foreclose on the process of enquiry, and to hasten to our beliefs on any ground save that of dispassionate examination of the evidence. Prejudice and passion are more frequently the sources of our belief than we realise, and unconscious mechanisms are ever at work determining the source of our conscious thought."<sup>1</sup> In other words, the psychology of rumour and credulity rests upon the fact that 'the wish is father to the thought.' A similar explanation may be given to that boasting and revelation of matters secret which have been mentioned earlier. Usually such manifestations occurred while men were at the Base, or at any rate before they had been much in contact with actual warfare. Life in the Army lent itself largely to the suppression of all individualistic qualities of a self-assertive kind. As Stephen Graham says in *A Private in the Guards*, "There is a deep hypnotical effect produced by the great army machine. Moving in its splendour and terror before the eyes, it suggests the thought to the heart: 'You have ceased to be anything or to count for anything in yourself—only the Army counts for anything.'" A man soon learned to see this, and the discipline to which he was subjected kept in check the self-assertion and self-display which are more or less instinctive qualities with all men. These qualities were, however, not destroyed,

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction to Psychology*, p. 108.

not eliminated from the total personality: they were simply submerged within the unconscious, and showed their presence there in those letters home which contained hints of the unconscious desire to shine, or in that readiness to pick up, add to, and pass on some story. Further experience of army life, and, particularly, experience of what it meant to be in the front line, caused these self-assertive elements to declare themselves in other ways. To them was due the self-respect, the extension of self-regard to the unit with which one was identified, and all the dogged determination to hold out which characterised the men of the British Army.

One aspect of the unconscious mind has received considerable notice as a result of war experience, namely, that which has to do with the repression of primitive impulse of an emotional kind which is in conflict with conscious intention. Such impulses are not always repressed completely, but sometimes they are: and there was one form of 'shell shock' which seemed to have been due to such repression. At the outset of hostilities, and for some time after the Great War was in operation, there was, I believe, no general recognition on the part of the army authorities of the connection between mental strain or 'shock' and bodily condition, nor was there any special preparation made for the treatment of men who might succumb to strain or specific 'shock.' It was soon found, however, that many such cases were of a distinctly hysteric type, involving dissociation and paralysis. There was nothing that could be discovered in such cases indicating the presence of deeply seated organic trouble, but

great functional dissociation was found, involving unaccountable pains, twitchings, and tremors, paralysis, dumbness, blindness, and deafness, and in many instances complete or partial loss of memory. That the cause of these things did not lie in organic trouble was clear from the reactions received from many of the reflexes which are more or less inactive in cases of organic mental trouble. It was further found that under hypnosis a temporary or a permanent cure could be effected in many cases, and that in cases of amnesia or loss of memory the revival of the memory of the occasion of shock, or of some long-forgotten event which had occurred in peace-time, and the restoration of its emotional content, had the effect of greatly alleviating or even removing some of the distressing symptoms. In such cases it seems obvious that the unconscious mind was at work, influencing conscious processes.

In dealing with such an obscure subject as the unconscious mind, one who has not the special training and experience of the medical neurologist must avoid dogmatism, except in so far as the latter supplies him with the material for harmonising theory and fact. There seems to a very general consensus of opinion at the present time among medical neurologists, as the result of their war experiences, that so far as the theories of Freud and Jung are concerned, there is a great deal to be said for them. There are many differences—even fundamental differences—in the theory of the unconscious as it is developed by these two great nerve specialists, but both are agreed that at the basis of all hysterical manifestations lies the 'buried

complex ' which is the result of conflict between the conscious and the unconscious, and the repression into the unconscious of primitive impulse which is completely out of harmony with conscious intention. Freud teaches that such repressed impulses are always of a sexual character, a concept which with him is almost identical with emotional. Jung, on the other hand, emphasises the conative character of the contents of both the conscious and the unconscious. His theory of libido seems to be that each individual has a certain fixed quantity of psychic energy which can flow either through the conscious or the unconscious. Libido can come into conflict with libido through flowing along channels which run counter to one another. If such conflict occurs on the conscious level there is libido for overcoming it, but if part of the libido must be used for repressing elements that are incompatible with conscious life and intention, the conflict may persist in the unconscious and be the parent of nervous disorder. The psychoneuroses of war do not seem to have supplied evidence of the kind required to settle the dispute as between the school of Vienna and the school of Zurich. Dr. Millais Culpin, however, finds that his own war experiences do not support Freud in this connection, and says that "the followers of Jung, who widen the basis of the psychoneuroses by seeking this cause in the libido, using the term to indicate something which, not being merely sexual, includes the striving of unconscious tendencies to find expression, and more particularly the followers of Adler, departing still further from the sexual basis and postulating the 'will to power' as a motive force, seem to provide a more easily

acceptable explanation.”<sup>1</sup> We may, therefore, leave the question of the ultimate character of the repressed elements to one side, since there is no agreement on the subject among those who are best qualified to reach a definite conclusion. It is otherwise, however, when we come to deal with the mechanism of the unconscious, for in cases of ‘shell shock,’ and especially in the cases of gross hysteric dissociation, there are to be found abundant evidences of repression and the buried complex.

In an article contributed to the *British Medical Journal*,<sup>2</sup> Dr. William Brown, the present Wilde Reader in Mental Philosophy at Oxford, writes, “All the severe cases of ‘shell shock’ of the hysterical type (that is, showing functional disturbance, or loss of sensory or motor powers) which I saw near the firing line in France suffered from loss of memory.” His treatment of such cases brought the discovery that there was an alleviation or a complete disappearance of the paralysis when he suggested to the patient under light hypnosis the vivid recollection of the circumstances in which he had been shell-shocked, and reinstated the emotion of fear as a present experience. The results of such a release of memory and its emotional content seem to imply the existence of a repressed emotional complex within the unconscious, and a causal relation between the unconscious mind and the functioning of mind in its conscious aspect. These things seem to be clearly shown in one case to which Dr. Brown bears testimony. The man in question had been badly shaken by a bomb explosion a few days before

<sup>1</sup> *Psychoneuroses of Peace and War*, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> *British Medical Journal*, June 14, 1919, pp. 734-36.

## 144 A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

'shell shock' actually seized him. He was sent back to the Field Ambulance for a few days' rest, being eventually ordered to report himself to the battalion Medical Officer. "Just as he reached the Aid Post," writes Dr. Brown, "a shell exploded near him and rendered him unconscious. On regaining consciousness he could neither hear, speak, nor walk." He then goes on to indicate his method of treatment and its results. "I gave him the suggestion that the moment I put my hand on his forehead he would again feel the explosion of the shell which knocked him down near the Aid Post, and would seem to be going through the same experience again, exactly as it happened. The moment my hand touched his forehead he became very tremulous, breathed rapidly, and shouted out: 'Feeny, Feeny, kill them. . . . Feeny, Feeny, where are you? It's getting too hot here. I can't put up with it any longer. . . . Feeny, come here and get me out, I can't stand up.'" (Very rapid breathing.) "I can't walk to the dug-out. Take hold of my arms, then I shall manage to get along. I don't want to lie on that wire bed. I want to get out of this. We have had everything from a rifle bullet to a Jack Johnson over here to-day, and three parts of us are knocked out."¹ While the man was shouting these things there were also signs of restored power in the arm and leg which had been paralysed. Before removing him from the hypnotic condition Dr. Brown told his patient where he was, who was speaking to him, and what had happened to him, thus linking up his hypnotic dream with his

¹ "Hypnosis, Suggestion, and Dissociation," *British Medical Journal*, No. 3050, p. 735.



present condition. He also suggested to him that on wakening he would remember everything he had been going through. On his removal from the hypnotic state it was found that the man could speak, although not perfectly, and that he could walk quite normally. It must be emphasised that there was no specific suggestion that the man would be able to speak or to use his limbs on awaking: memory alone was invoked. Dr. Brown states further that during a period of sixteen months in France 141 cases of mutism passed through his hands, and that without any suggestion to that effect, each of them was able to speak when made to live again through his terrifying experiences.

The first thing we see when the man's unconscious mind is thrown open is the presence of fear and an intense longing to be away from the circumstances of war. The trembling and the extremely rapid breathing indicate the operation of fear, and the longing for release from the war can be seen in the words, "It's getting too hot here. I can't put up with it any longer. . . . I want to get out of this. We have had everything from a rifle bullet to a Jack Johnson over here to-day, and three parts of us are knocked out." Moreover, the man's words seem to indicate the presence of unconscious thought. The man was rendered unconscious by the explosion, we are told: yet his words show that he knows that he cannot walk. It might be argued that the man was only transferring some conscious knowledge of his paralysed condition into the experience he was remembering, but for the fact that while he was speaking his right arm and leg, which had up till then been powerless, were showing signs of

movement, according to Dr. Brown's account. His paralysis had to that extent ceased at the moment of his speaking. The case seems to show the presence of processes within the unconscious which are similar to those which are operative at the conscious level.

The influence of the unconscious mind upon the conscious experience is also shown. As soon as the man remembered, as soon as he was shown what was in his unconscious mind, as soon as the buried 'fear complex' was raised to the conscious level, the symptoms of his hysterical condition began to disappear. He spoke, he moved limbs which until then he could not move. It might be possible to get these results from direct hypnotic suggestion, but in this case it has to be remembered that there was no suggestion that the man was or would be able to move or to speak. The sole suggestion was that he would be able to remember. The psychic energy which had been required to keep the man's thoughts and feelings buried in the unconscious seems to have been released for other work, and to have furnished the requisite conation for speech and movement, as soon as the repressed content of the unconscious was raised to the conscious level.

Building upon the experience of cases such as this, one can form some idea of what takes place within a man who eventually succumbs to shell shock. He hates the whole circumstances of war,—if one may use the word 'hate' for something that he will not allow to express itself—and he is afraid,—if one may speak of 'fear' in the case of something which is not allowed to declare its presence in conscious action. The emotional resultant of the

stenches, the strain, the gruesome sights is thrust below the level of the conscious mind, and the man will not even acknowledge to himself that it is there. By and by, these things do not seem to give him the least concern. None the less the conflict still continues in the unconscious. He will not allow his hatred to rise up and add its energy to the fighting spirit which will bring the circumstances of war to an end in due course. Were one to ask him whether he would like to go home, he would answer, 'Rather'—there speaks the unconscious, but he would follow with the words 'but not till the job's finished'—there speaks the conscious mind. He feels that it would be impossible for him to 'carry on,' were he to allow his fears and his hatred of the conditions to be motives that constantly and consciously dominated him. And so he thrusts these things deep into his unconscious mind, refusing to acknowledge even to himself that he has such impulses. Yet all the time there is within the unconscious a striving to get away from it all. As time goes on, and comrade after comrade is killed or wounded—'Lucky fellow to have got a blighty one!'—'Poor bloke, his troubles are all over!'—the conflict between the conscious mind and the unconscious repression grows stronger. One day he is knocked over by a shell, and when he recovers consciousness—indeed, he may never have lost consciousness—he discovers that he is blind, or that he cannot move an arm or a leg, or that he cannot speak. And so he, too, is definitely out of the war. The unconscious mind has got the better of the conflict, and he is suffering from hysteric dissociation. What has happened is that the unconscious mind has blocked

the flow of psychic energy, and prevented it from passing along certain efferent channels, and that it will continue so to act until the unconscious complex has been raised to the conscious level and dealt with there.

Leaving out of account those cases which were definitely pathological, there was another type of war neurosis revealed during the war. "Medical experience," writes Dr. C. G. Jung, "has taught us that there are two large groups of functional nervous disorders. The one embraces all those forms of disease which are designated *hysterical*, the other all those forms which the French school has designated *psychasthenic*." <sup>1</sup> As we have seen, the former type of case is due to complete dissociation between certain elements within the personality. The latter type is also due to dissociation, but to a dissociation which is not complete, showing symptoms which, while they may approximate in some cases to those of the hysteric type, never show them completely. "It is," says Pierre Janet, "the striking trait of their character that they never have any symptom in its completeness, and this incomplete character of the disturbance of their personality falls within a general law." <sup>2</sup> The classification, however, is not so much one of symptoms as of temperamental type, and English writers incline towards giving the latter class the name of 'anxiety states,' ranging from what before the war might have been called neurasthenia to those cases which are anxiety states proper, characterised by obsessions of one kind or another.

<sup>1</sup> *Analytical Psychology*, p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> "A Symposium on the Subconscious," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, vol. ii. p. 60.

There are among civilised peoples two clearly marked psychological types, to which every individual more or less approximates. Jung calls them the 'introvert type' and the 'extrovert type.' For the former the inner world of thought is the supreme object of interest, for the latter the outward world of feeling and action. The extrovert is of that emotional type which seeks to be habitually in rapport with the world of outward affairs. He adapts himself to his environment by refusing to think of elements which are hostile to his emotional tone, so that his unconscious consists largely of these thought elements.<sup>1</sup> When faced with the necessity of an adaptation which can only be achieved through thought, he is unable to do so, and breaks down under strain. Should this befall him, his neurosis takes the form of hysteria. On the other hand, the introvert is unemotional. He is slow of speech, introspective, slow to act. His emotional life is largely repressed, or should he show emotion under pressure of his culture it is of a very conventional type. Habitually, he adapts himself through thought, rather than feeling, and when faced with an emergency which demands adaptation through feeling he is conscious of strain. Should he break down under strain his neurotic symptoms take the form of fear-tinged thoughts about himself, strange obsessions, reluctance to perform certain acts, but never complete inability to accomplish them, doubts about certain things that have been done or should have been done, but never complete forgetfulness of them. In the former case the conflict between the conscious and

<sup>1</sup> See *Analytical Psychology*, p. 405.

the unconscious mind is continued within the unconscious: in the latter, it is either semi-conscious or, as Freud teaches, the repressed emotion shows itself in consciousness as an anxiety neurosis.

Considering the tremendous strain put upon men by the war, it is surprising that the number of definitely diagnosed psychoneuroses was relatively so small in the British Army—only about 1 per cent. of the men engaged. In his book, *National Welfare and National Decay*, Professor McDougall advances a theory which may supply an explanation of the relative immunity from the more obvious symptoms of war strain which seems to have characterised men of British nationality.

In this work, Professor McDougall advances the theory that both introversion and extroversion are the expression of qualities that are racial, and that in a nation of predominantly Nordic racial strain the introvert type will greatly preponderate, while among nations of a strongly Mediterranean strain the extrovert type will predominate. He advances many illustrations of national characteristics which seem to give some support to this view. Now, the British nation is of a predominantly Nordic racial strain, and one might therefore expect to find a preponderating number of the men in its army succumbing to the introvert type of war neurosis, for it is highly probable that sooner or later all men will succumb to the strain of adapting themselves to the circumstances of modern warfare. "Meeting men with a history of three or four years of strenuous warfare before their breakdown," writes Dr. Millais Culpin, "leads me to believe that everyone, if subjected to sufficient of the terrors of

modern warfare, would eventually reach the limits of physical or mental endurance." <sup>1</sup> The introvert type of war neurosis seems, however, to be one that is often difficult to recognise as such, for its symptoms range from vague physical sensations and worries of a neurasthenic type, right up to the experience of anxieties more or less definite, and of obsessions more or less pronounced. It is possible that many cases of men whose condition was due to or aggravated by a neurosis were never classified as such. In this connection Dr. Culpin writes: "The frequent occurrence of an earlier diagnosis of D.A.H. (disordered action of the heart) in many of the patients finally sent to special neurological hospitals confirms the view that disordered action of the heart is most often a neurosis." <sup>2</sup> Other physical disabilities also may have been due to thoughts that were repressed or that lay just within the borders of consciousness acting as a persistent ferment and anxiety. The exigencies of the war did not permit of men being withdrawn from active operations except when their physical condition rendered them useless, and many men who were suffering from the vague physical consequences of mental strain may never have reached the point of classification. 'Debility' was a diagnosis which may sometimes have hidden psychological factors, and 'medicine and duty' a panacea for ills that were more than physical.

Of the cases which did receive classification, however, as neuroses, the majority among British troops

<sup>1</sup> *Psychoneuroses of War and Peace*, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

## 152 A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

conform to the type which Dr. Jung indicates as characteristic of the introvert. At least, such is the conclusion from the evidence supplied by Dr. Culpin and Dr. Brown. In the classification of the cases that came under his supervision, Dr. Culpin shows the great majority of them to be either anxiety states or cases of psychasthenia. In five groups of definite psychoneuroses, embracing 397 cases, only 115 represent hysteria either in its more definite form or in combination with anxiety symptoms, while 225 cases are definitely cases of pure anxiety or psychasthenia: and in one group, embracing 239 men, among whom no predisposition to neurosis could be discovered, he shows 72 (30 per cent.) displaying hysteric symptoms and 159 (66 per cent.) revealing the presence of anxiety states or psychasthenia.<sup>1</sup> In a personal communication received from Dr. William Brown, he states: "I can say definitely that among my own cases of 'shell shock' the proportion of hysterics was roughly 40 per cent., a fairly constant proportion throughout my work in France, 1916-1918, in a forward area." These figures seem to point to the preponderance among British troops of the introvert type of war neurosis.

Other symptoms pointing in the direction of this introvert psychological type as widespread throughout the British Army, are the lack of interest in their immediate surroundings and the 'war-weariness' which has survived with some men down to the present day, and a kind of *folie de doute* which prevented men from returning at once after demobilisation to their former vocations. There

<sup>1</sup> *Psychoneuroses of War and Peace*, pp. 41-2.



were also widespread phobias and obsessions which did not interfere with the operations of war, but which none the less seem to point to a neurotic condition. Many men, for example, were afraid to light a third cigarette with a single match. May not the unnatural craving for alcohol which many men displayed have been symptomatic of such a tendency, and of the desire to escape from it? "Alcohol," writes Dr. McDougall, "acts on the nervous system in a way which renders it temporarily extrovert: and thus for the introvert it brings relief from the brooding melancholy to which he is constitutionally liable: it enables him to enjoy the freedom of emotional expression which in his normal condition is denied him by his introvert constitution."<sup>1</sup> It was a craving which many men only developed under the strain of active service, and I suggest that it was in such cases the symptom of a war neurosis.

So far as national characteristics are concerned, the Frenchman is the very opposite of the Briton. He shows very many of the qualities of the extrovert psychological type. He is far less reserved in the expression of his emotions and far less introspective. He is far more moved by the gregarious instinct, for in the country district the Frenchman lives in a village community, while the Englishman lives in an isolated farmhouse: and in the town the Englishman's home is his castle, while the Frenchman loves to live in public and to take his meals *en famille* in some café. One might expect that with such characteristics French troops would show a preponderating number of hysterical neuroses under

<sup>1</sup> *National Welfare and National Decay*, p. 100 (note).

the strain of war.<sup>1</sup> Should this be the case, it would give considerable support to Jung's theory of the importance of psychological type, and of the kind of neurotic symptom which either type will display: and it would also go far to prove Dr. McDougall's theory that the two types are racial, rather than individual, in character.

So far as the evidence from the British side is concerned, there seems to be much that favours these views. The preponderance of 'anxiety states' among the cases of war neurosis in the British Army, and the possibility that such cases were more numerous than the figures indicate, point to the Briton as an introvert type. Moreover, we know that for the introvert the self is the supreme value and the supreme object of interest. It is in no offensive sense that one says that the Briton is self-assertive, for it is the secret of his pioneering, his great colonising ability, his spirit of adventure. We have, however, since the war ended, a great display of self-assertion which is not so valuable. In the Army this was an impulse which had to be constantly repressed. There a self-assertive man is a mutinous man, therefore the impulse had to be repressed, or to show itself in ways that were legitimate. I do not suppose that many men would have admitted that they expected to be given opportunities for self-display when they returned home from active service. They would not have admitted that they expected to be fêted or to be

<sup>1</sup> Despite very many efforts I have been unable to unlock any source from which the various types of war neurosis among French troops could be ascertained, and so cannot either verify or disprove this hypothesis.

treated in a different way from other men. Yet in a wholly unconscious or, perhaps more generally, semi-conscious way this is actually what many men did expect. There had been going on for a long time a conflict between their more predominant impulse of self-assertion and the impulse of submission upon which army discipline is built up and by which it is maintained. I suggest that the self-assertion which many men displayed in an exaggerated form—the war badges, the chevrons, the wound-stripes, the medal ribbons worn with civilian clothes, and other actions—were the outcome of that conflict and the symptoms of an exaggerated sense of self, such as is shown as an early symptom of organic trouble in cases of dementia præcox. In their case, however, the symptoms were due to mental conflict, I suggest, and were the outcome of that neurotic condition which characterises the introvert under strain :

There's power in me and will to dominate  
Which I must exercise, they hurt me else.

The whole subject of the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious aspect of mind is in such an undeveloped state at present, that I venture these suggestions with the utmost diffidence. That there is a deep, intimate relation, and that conscious processes are profoundly modified by occurrences within the unconscious seems to be established by some of the facts which have been instanced—especially by such cases as the one cited by Dr. William Brown in his article on 'Hypnosis, Suggestion, and Dissociation.' A great deal of very

## **156    A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT**

careful investigation and comparison will, however, be required before it is competent for anyone to state conclusively that such and such an act is the outcome of such and such processes developed within the unconscious mind and related in a specific way to conscious process.

## VIII

### THE INFLUENCE OF GROUP LIFE UPON THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE ARMY

ACCORDING to the teaching of Le Bon, when a number of individuals are incorporated in a crowd of any kind, their individual qualities are profoundly modified. "The fact that they have been transformed into a crowd," he says, "puts them in possession of a sort of collective mind which makes them feel, think, and act in a manner quite different from that in which each individual of them would feel, think, and act, were he in a state of isolation."<sup>1</sup> In the interests of a genetic psychology which seeks to give an explanation of behaviour, as far as it can be explained by psychological method, account must be taken not only of the mental structure and innate dispositions of the individual on both the conscious and the unconscious level, but of the individual in the social setting in which his behaviour takes place.

Every man who became a member of an army group has realised how greatly his behaviour was modified by his inclusion in it. In the majority of cases mentality was greatly changed from what it had been before enlistment. The vast majority of men who entered the Army during the war had

<sup>1</sup> *The Crowd*, p. 29.

little or no connection with army life before doing so. Their behaviour had been the result of innate impulses modified and developed in one way or another through the necessities of that community and those associations in the midst of which they had lived. They had their traditions, their code of honour, their moral judgments, which were the outcome of a moulding influence exercised by the community to which they had belonged. They undertook one kind of work rather than another probably because of some sentiment towards it among those with whom they were brought most into association. While engaged at their work they behaved, as a rule, under the influence of the sentiments which held sway among their fellow-workmen. If there was a sentiment favourable to 'speeding up,' there were no signs of slackness: if, on the other hand, the sentiment was favourable to a policy of 'ca' canny,' they acted accordingly. The Army took such men, and in many cases completely altered their behaviour. The man who would have thrown down his tools and marched out of the workshop, had he received a harsh word from his foreman or employer, soon learned to receive far harsher words from those to whom he was subordinate, without acting in a similar way. The man who held as a firm article in his creed the inalienable right of refusing work, or of going on strike in the middle of an important contract, soon learned to submit to conditions and to make a joke of matters which in civilian life would have aroused his fiercest resentment. And all these changes in outlook and behaviour were bridged by a few months of association within the Army.

Enquiry is needed at this point as to the nature of the causes at work in producing these modifications in behaviour. It must be clearly recognised at the outset that no individual is ever in complete isolation from some social group. "Every man's environment," says Dr. R. M. MacIver, "consists of his fellow-men and the world of his fellow-men. His actions and thoughts must therefore, every one of them, be in some kind and degree social phenomena." <sup>1</sup> He may be separated physically from his social grouping at a given moment, but he is still within certain of its spheres of influence. Relatively, and for the moment, a soldier on outpost duty may be isolated from his comrades, but he is still a member of the Army and is swayed by that fact. Its traditions and sentiments are still a controlling force. Without these he would probably succumb to feelings of fear and loneliness, and would desert his post. We cannot, therefore, regard any group such as an army as a mere summation of individuals. It is a unity which is not mechanical, for the relationship between its members is intrinsic to the individuals who form it by their inter-relation. As Dr. MacIver says, "The bonds of society are in the members of society, and not outside them." No matter where a soldier may be as regards his physical context, he is still in intimate relation with the other individuals who compose his unit, and with the group as a whole. Formerly, the man was in a certain environment composed, let us suppose, of his home surroundings, his work, his fellow-workmen, and the whole body of traditions possessed by and expressed by his community. He reacted in specific

<sup>1</sup> *Community*, p. 5.

ways to this environment. Now his environment has changed, and his behaviour changes in a corresponding way.

We enquire, then, into the nature of the environment on account of which and in reaction towards which a man acted in one way as a civilian and in quite another way as a soldier. It is necessary at the outset to attempt something in the nature of a definition of the social whole to which the man is related. There is a great deal of ambiguity in the use of the word 'community,' for it may refer to a very wide grouping of individuals who live a common life, but of which the interests and relations are so varied and heterogeneous that the whole scarcely constitutes a unity. In so far as these interests are common, however, there is either unity or the possibility of unity. Community is however, a matter of degree, as MacIver points out, and within every larger community there are smaller communities, associations of more restricted grouping which are organised for a specific end or ends. It is by reason of his relationship to these, and to those within the same associational group, that the individual man owes the greater part of his modification on the side of behaviour. A man living in a working-class community—using the word 'community' in the narrower sense—has his behaviour directed largely by the sentiments and traditions of his class. These have come into existence through the pressure of circumstances which have given rise to an association having for its specific end the defence of working-class interests and the amelioration of working-class life. His behaviour is not in the least controlled by what



goes on in some other group which has been organised within the larger community of city or state, except in so far as its actions antagonise the interests of the class with which he is identified, or furthers them. Except in so far as he is a member of an association, its traditions and sentiments do not mould his mentality or control his behaviour, unless these sentiments and traditions are of such a kind as to emphasise the distinctiveness of his own group, and thereby organise the relation of the latter group to the former.

An army is an association of this kind. It has a unity which is due to the very restricted character of the object which has brought it into being : and this restriction of object is all the more marked in the case of an army which has been brought into being in the actual circumstances of war. However the individual may express his proximate motive, it is the desire to be brought face to face with the enemy for attack or defence that is the ultimate object in each man's mind. The men who form such an army may possess great diversities of primitive disposition and mentality, but it is the impulse which they have in common that serves as a basis for the unity of the army.

The unity of an army of this kind is further developed by its organisation, which consists in the subordination of individual impulse to the intelligent control of the Higher Command. Discipline is the agency by which this process of subordination is achieved. "It is discipline," says Sir Martin Conway, "that makes the difference between a regiment and a mob. Drill is merely the agency by which discipline is inculcated, and that, not the

shapely performance of manœuvres, is its true purpose. So long as a mob is filled with a common impulse it may act as a unit, but the moment the common impulse wavers the mob has no nerves or brain to bring it back into corporate integrity. Discipline is the means whereby nerves are given to a crowd, enabling it to be under the direction of a single brain." <sup>1</sup> From the first moment of his entry into the Army the soldier is subjected to discipline. His instinct of self-aggression is more and more restrained in those directions which make for freedom of action, and his instinct of submission becomes more and more operative. As a consequence, the individual becomes highly imitative, conforming his movements in every respect to those of the drill-sergeant. He is not permitted to make the slightest alteration in the movements which he is shown, and is stopped again and again, until at last his movements are satisfactory. Nor is the drill-sergeant himself permitted to make any departure from what is required by the army authorities. His movements are in reality the result of commands which have come down to him from the Army Council and the Higher Command. In a short time each man will act like an automaton on the word of command, and the whole group will behave as one man. At this stage in a soldier's training his behaviour is almost mechanical, and the unity achieved throughout the group is very little higher than that displayed by a machine.

Discipline has, however, within its elements which tend to raise the moral and intellectual level of the individual mind, and as a consequence to develop

<sup>1</sup> *The Crowd in Peace and War*, p. 134.

the mentality of the entire group. The mere fact that each man acts like his neighbour enables the individual to rely upon the co-operation of his fellows with reference to the common end. On the parade ground each man soon discovers that every member of his unit is co-operating with him in the evolution in progress. In the trenches, he is confident that the men on either side of him are doing the same, and that the divisions on the flanks of his own division are co-operating for the common end. McDougall says of this co-operation that it is "the essential aim and justification of all group life." It is through discipline that it is achieved in the Army, and the mutual trust engendered has the effect of welding what might otherwise be only a mechanical organisation into a living unity.

It might be pointed out, in passing, that no community of any kind and no association can hold together as a living unity without co-operation and mutual trust between its members. Trust, no matter from what it arises, gives unity to a group: distrust and suspicion tend to disintegrate it. Trust is, therefore, a mighty force in promoting a group spirit. The idea of the group as a whole is thus developed by the addition of a clear view of the relation of individuals to one another as they mutually co-operate for a common end. Even the presence of untrustworthy individuals with whom he is in inter-relation, within a man's army group, will only serve to intensify his idea of the group as a whole by emphasising the fact of mutual co-operation for a common end. The untrustworthy man is not co-operating, and his behaviour jars

upon the idea of the group as a whole, and so intensifies that idea.

Everything that tends to emphasise the essential or even the artificial differences displayed by any army group promotes its individuality, and gives to its members an increased sense of its unity. Certain essential differences in drill and ceremonial in different types of regiment serve to promote the idea of the individuality and unity of his group in the mind of a man who is aware of such differences between his own regiment and others. Customs within the officers' mess have their influence upon the rank and file also, developing a group self-consciousness within the mind of each man. The same result is affected by the regimental march, the distinctive badges, anniversaries, and the whole body of customs which enter into the traditions of a regiment or other army group. When 'Kitchener's Army' came into existence, it had no traditions of its own, but in so far as it could, its Service Battalions took over many of the traditions, habits, and customs of the corresponding regiments in the Regular Army, and adopted its slang. Such regimental traditions helped to develop the idea of group unity in the mind of the individual soldier. Subsequently, through continuity of existence, the various units formed a body of traditions for themselves, so that every new recruit in later days found himself in an environment of traditions, some of which emphasised the unity of his own particular group, while others brought him into touch with, and made him conscious of, a larger unity, consisting of the brigade, the division, or the Army itself.

A further intensification of group self-consciousness was secured to each soldier through interaction with the opposing force. He was constantly learning something about the force which lay in front of him, and as he did so his conception of his own group became more defined.

Everything that gives the individual soldier the idea of group unity serves also to promote a self-regarding sentiment within the group. Men identify themselves more and more with their battalion, brigade, or division. The idea of these groups has associated with it a rich organisation of emotional dispositions which are also incorporated in the man's own self-regarding sentiment. He takes a pride in the glowing past of his unit, he remembers with enthusiasm its great achievements and glorious history. It is, however, always the individual man who takes this pride in his group. He makes its traditions his own. He reinterprets them and makes them a part of the content of his own mind.

The conditions by which a man's life in the Army was governed are elements in his environment, and no further explanation of individual change would seem to be required than that which displays an individual reacting to a changed environment in accordance with the laws of his own nature. Certainly, a man on active service with the Army will act in ways of which he seemed to be incapable in civil life, but the disposition so to act must have been there, and only required the specific environment to bring it into operation. Professor McDougall would explain the modifications in individual outlook and behaviour as due to the operation of a

super-individual, substantive unity which he calls the 'group mind.' On the other hand, MacIver shows that 'to posit a super-individual mind because individual minds are altered by their relations to one another (as indeed they are altered by their relations to physical conditions) is surely gratuitous.' <sup>1</sup> Herbert Spencer has taught that the structure and properties of a society are determined by the properties of the units, the individual human beings of whom it is composed. Criticising this view, McDougall himself admits that "each unit, when it becomes a member of the group, displays properties or modes of reaction which it does not display, which remain latent or potential only, as long as it remains outside that group," and he goes on to say: "It is possible, therefore, to discover these potentialities of the unit only by studying them as elements in the life of the whole. That is to say, the aggregate which is a society has a certain individuality, is a true whole which in great measure determines the nature and the modes of activity of its parts." <sup>2</sup> Certainly there is an individuality about a society such as an army group which is distinct from the individuality of any of its members. It is, however, simply the resultant of many minds, many individualities in co-operation. Through the operation of those fundamental principles of crowd psychology, suggestion, sympathy, and imitation, each individual takes something from other individuals and gives something to them, and there is nothing in the final resultant which cannot be traced back to individuals in co-operation, or to

<sup>1</sup> *Community*, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *The Group Mind*, p. 7.

individual reaction to the social whole which is held in being through co-operation. It is true that the tendency in a disciplined army is in the direction of the loss of individuality. But where this is completely the case there is a great loss in efficiency, just as there is loss of efficiency where individual self-assertion is permitted. The British Army on active service had such an organisation that command was secured to a few minds in deliberation, and was imposed upon the individual soldier, but his individuality was not completely destroyed by this fact. The private soldier in the ranks still remained a free agent in willing the common end. He co-operated with that part of the organisation which he believed to be most capable of choosing the appropriate means to that end. He accepted the means chosen, and willed them as the proximate end to be achieved. On the other hand, the result of the free play of individual motive can be seen in the history of the Russian Army, when it ceased to be an army and became a battle-ground of self-assertive elements which ruined its efficiency and eventually destroyed it. Indeed, it would seem that the more highly disciplined an army is, the greater is the emphasis laid upon individuality and individual co-operation. Thus General von Berghardi writes: "Wherever we turn our eyes in the wide sphere of modern warfare, we encounter the necessity of independent action—by the private soldier in the thick of the battle, or the lonely patrol in the midst of the enemy's country, as much as by the leader of an army who handles huge hosts. In battle, as well as in operations, the requisite uniformity of action can only be attained at the present time

by independent co-operation of all in accordance with a fixed general scheme.”<sup>1</sup>

With regard, then, to the kind of social whole that is revealed in army life, one may say that it is a co-operative unity. McDougall insists that it is a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts, and that therefore it is necessary to infer the addition of a group mind to complete the equation. It is true that the effort of the Army at the Front was filled with a courage which no mere sum in addition could explain. There was, it is true, courage which arose directly from individual disposition, but there was at times something that was greater than this, and not to be explained solely by the laws of individual disposition. Someone has said in this connection that “it was not the individual French soldier that the Germans faced: it was the Spirit of Napoleon living in and enthusing each man according to his capacity.” But the ‘Spirit of Napoleon’ is surely just a phrase which disguises the Napoleonic tradition of a day when France was encircled by foes, and when Frenchmen thrust them back without counting the cost in blood and labour. Each mind had made that tradition its own to the extent of its capacity, and through mass suggestion and sympathy its emotional associations became all the greater by reason of the many minds which were co-operating towards the ends to which it prompted. The battle traditions of many regiments and divisions in the British Army have filled the individual soldier who belonged to them with a similar spirit, and have fitted the unit in question for being irresistible ‘shock troops.’ It is possible that the mind of no individual

<sup>1</sup> *Germany and the Next War*, p. 207.



actually contained the whole of such tradition, but each held some part of it, and many minds in co-operation gave it a richer content and aroused emotional dispositions more strongly than would have been possible had those minds been isolated from one another.

McDougall lays immense emphasis upon the group spirit as the means of raising the moral and intellectual level of the individual members of a group. He defines the group spirit, however, as "the idea of the group with the sentiment of devotion to the group developed in the minds of all its members," and he treats this group spirit as the equivalent of what he has elsewhere called the 'group mind.' It is not a mind, it is a sentiment which has been developed through individual reaction to environment, and maintained by everything which favours the presentation of the group as such to the individual mind.

In the Army on active service the position occupied by this sentiment was very commanding and very influential in its effects upon individual behaviour. Belief in the power of the group spirit lay behind the formation of territorial units at the outset of war. Lord Haldane already had his Territorial Associations in being, and in the early days of the war this system was maintained and extended. Men from the same locality were brought together to form battalions: men from the same nation were formed into divisions. And during one stage of the war there was to be seen the moral ill-effect of incorporating men in units other than those for which their nationality and racial traditions best fitted them. The Highlander who lost his kilt

## 170 A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

on his transference to an English regiment lost also much of his effectiveness, and the same result followed, though not to the same extent, when men were transferred from one battalion to another even within the same brigade or division. Men had formed a sentiment for some original unit, its traditions were part of the content of their own mind, and they had come to identify their own good with its good. Owing to shortage of men, individual soldiers had sometimes to be sent to battalions or divisions for which they had no such sentiment, often with deplorable moral results. Everything which gave definition to the unity of a man's army group served at the same time to promote this group sentiment. The very modifications in uniform, the regimental, brigade, and divisional crests and signs, helped to further the idea of group unity and to develop a sentiment of regard for his unit in each man's mind. It is easy to see how greatly a man's moral would deteriorate, were he transferred from a unit for which he had a powerful sentiment of regard to another for which he had probably no sentiment whatever. He will not make the sacrifices for the latter which he would have done for the former, for he will not have come to identify its good with his own.

A further truth revealed by army organisation during the war was that of the existence of a multiple group consciousness and the formation of a hierarchy of group sentiments for a system of groups in which each larger group includes the lesser. The battalion was the natural object of a man's group sentiment. Its whole organisation favoured the idea of its unity and the sentiment of regard

for it. In the recent war, however, divisions became unitary wholes in men's minds, and sentiments were directed towards them which reinforced the operation of battalion sentiment and contributed greatly to the moral of the troops. When men were asked to what unit they belonged, very often, perhaps almost universally, it was the name of their division that they first mentioned. A man who belonged to a division which had covered itself with glory again and again, would bear himself gallantly not only for the honour of his battalion but for the honour of his division. The very identification of himself with some body of a territorial kind has a similar effect upon a man's behaviour, and I remember a sergeant of a Scottish regiment who was brought in wounded during the early days of the German advance in 1918, weeping because, as he said, he had seen Scottish troops with their backs to the enemy. The organisation of many army units at that time makes it probable that the men whom he had seen acting in this way were forced levies, perhaps not even of Scottish nationality, and in whose minds no great controlling group sentiments had been formed.

During the war there were also, I believe, formed in the minds of many men sentiments of an antagonistic kind, or perhaps, 'unconscious complexes'—antagonistic, that is, to the larger civilian group out of which they had been taken. I have met men after a period of leave who were most bitter in their remarks about those at home, whose great complaint was about the way in which the war interfered with their comfort, and whose one desire seemed to be to get as much money out of

their war occupations as they could. I believe that such sentiments were for the most part repressed during actual warfare, although during a brief mutinous outbreak at one of the Bases they were apparent in some of the demands expressed and some of the language used. For example, during its continuance men went to the station and shouted to others who were going home on leave, "Tell the people at home that we are on strike, too." But if such antagonistic sentiments were not obviously operative in reducing the moral of the troops, I think their presence may supply a partial explanation of the anti-social attitude of many soldiers since their demobilisation. The original army groupings have to a great extent disappeared, yet the ex-serviceman still regards himself as in a class apart, and has formed new groups with their distinguishing badges, in order to mark himself off from those who did not serve, and for the sake of mutual co-operation towards the maintenance and furtherance of the common interests of his class.

Some analysis is required in regard to the nature of individual volition within the Army at the Front. For example, when the men of the British Force obeyed Haig's famous 'back to the wall' order in the spring of 1918, was it by individual volition alone, or through the operation of a collective will that they were enabled to do so? McDougali has pointed out that the psychology of a patriot army is greatly simplified as compared with that of other large human groups by two conditions—the restriction of intellectual processes by which the large means for securing the common end are chosen to one or a few minds only: and the great definite-

ness and strength of that common purpose in the minds of all. If, therefore, the collective will is ever operative, it will be more easily discovered in such a group than in one of greater complexity. In the case regarding which the question has arisen, the men had been retiring for about a week in face of a force greatly superior in numbers. They were weary for lack of proper rest and sufficient food. They were suffering from the depression which such a retirement brought with it. They were anticipating, in some divisions at any rate, that they would be withdrawn from the line for a period of rest and re-equipment. The next day they were sent into the line again and did not waver in the duties imposed upon them. Will is just a matter of motivation, and I believe the motive that controlled and directed the impulses of each man in these conditions was his sentiment, or rather his hierarchy of sentiments, of regard for those multiple groups of which he was a component. The whole army was in desperate straits: therefore his regard for it bade him stand fast and, if possible, go forward. His battalion, his division, had just been retiring, therefore his regard for them, for their honour and good name, bade him show what these groups could do. But the honour and good name and safety of these groups would scarcely have moved individual men in such circumstances, had they not in some way identified themselves with the groups of which they were members, and had they not in addition possessed some sentiment of tender regard for them. The group sentiment would seem to supply the energy required for the motivation of the will in such a case, and it was a single motive

operating in the mind of all, or of a compact majority of those who obeyed Haig's order. It does not, however, thereby become a structural part of some super-individual, collective will. The sentiment is still a part of the individual's mental structure, and it is still the individual will that is operative, however powerful may be the motive supplied by the group sentiment. In the case in question we see the operation of 'the will of all,' rather than of a collective will. It is not a single will which operates, but many different wills, directed towards the same object and moved by the same sentiments.

It has been said that the life of an army illustrates better than that of any other group the influence of leadership. The moral effect of good leadership upon the individual is indeed incalculable. This is, however, a subject which, so far as I know, has never been worked out with any degree of detail in reference to the psychological factors that are at work. We know that a crowd without leaders is a mob, moved by a body of unorganised impulses. We know, also, that a crowd inevitably seeks to put itself under leaders, and if its leaders drop away it immediately seeks others. Without leaders even an army, despite its discipline, would quickly degenerate to the level of a mob in which irrational impulse would be the sole controlling and directing influence. It is possible that a crowd finds in its leaders the representation of its unity, or of that unity to which it seeks to attain. An army without leaders will have no cohesion, no unity except the unity supplied by emotional impulse, and it can be broken up by a very much inferior force under

trusted leaders. This was seen to take place during a period of mutinous activity. The ring-leaders were segregated and the trouble collapsed. In its final stage two groups of mutineers were seen trying to effect a juncture across a railway, but for lack of leaders they were unable to do so, despite the fact that only a mere handful of men stood between them. Groups do not resent the exercise of authority over them: they insist upon it for the sake of their cohesion. At the same time they insist that their leaders should be trustworthy. I suggest that a group finds in its leaders the visible representation of its own ideal unity, and for this reason it seeks to put itself under leaders. "A leader," says Le Bon, "constitutes the first element towards the organisation of heterogeneous crowds."

Sir Martin Conway gives a very useful classification of leaders—Crowd-Compellers, Crowd-Exponents, and Crowd-Representatives. I suggest that whatever else they may be, the leaders of any association are crowd representatives: they represent the unity of the association to its individual members, even though they may not be its representatives in any other sense. Every army officer was a crowd-representative in this sense. The recruit would submit to his commands unquestioningly because he represented the entire organisation of which the individual soldier was a unit. And just because those in whom authority was vested in the army must represent the whole, there could be no efficient army organised upon democratic principles. Not even in America, which boasts so much of its democratic principles, is there an election of army officers. For the rank and file to elect them would

destroy their quality as representatives, in the eyes of the men: they would not be representative of the whole, but of that part which had selected them. Leaders speak with the voice and authority of the group which is organised for a specific end in so far as they embody the unity which is to be attained in pursuing that end. They will be obeyed by those they lead as long as they are recognised as representing that unity. But should a leader be distrusted for any reason, should he seem to be acting for his own interest or his own safety, or in such a way as to destroy the army's co-operative unity, obedience will be given more and more reluctantly. Men at the Front would have done anything for an officer they trusted, but only what discipline compelled them to do in the case of one in whom they had no confidence.

In their influence upon individual action, leaders were sometimes more than representative of the Army as an organised whole. Some of them were crowd-compellers. In the recent war no general revealed this quality to the same extent as was the case with leaders in former wars. Sir Martin Conway, indeed, considers that the King of the Belgians revealed the qualities of a leader of this type when he says that 'he has shown himself a most efficient and powerful leader of men, who could hold his nation in the hollow of his hand, or lead it whither without him it would not have gone.' His army, however, formed a comparatively small group. For the most part, the bodies over which the Higher Command held sway were too large to permit of the development of crowd-compulsion on an extended scale on the part of any individual



general. No leader such as Napoleon was arose to hypnotise the individual soldier and to carry him forward into marvellous exploits. At the same time there were crowd-compellers who had this ability in every regiment. Utterly without self-conscious pose, they compelled men to follow them and to do great deeds, by the sheer force of their personality.

Leaders were an element in the total environment within which men acted, and it would be difficult to estimate too highly their effect upon individual behaviour during the war. Confidence in their leaders was of supreme importance. In a war such as the Great European War, individual leadership was, unfortunately, for the most part of short duration. High-explosive shells and the machine-gun bullet left blanks which were being constantly filled up by new leaders. One in whom his men had confidence maintained and developed their group self-consciousness, for one could hear individual men and groups of men boasting of the qualities of their platoon or company commander, or commanding officer, in contrast to what they believed to be the qualities possessed by leaders of other units. Even apart from such qualities, however, there was that in the leaders who followed one another in rapid succession which maintained the cohesion of the various groups. They were representatives of the organised whole and served to maintain the group spirit on that account. Confidence in their leaders was maintained to the very end among all ranks in the British Army. Had it been preserved to the same extent in the German Army, the war might have had a different

ending. As Professor McDougall says, "If the German Higher Command had been exercised from the first by a man who inspired the just confidence that was felt in the old Field-Marshal von Moltke by the Prussian armies of 1870, it is probable that the issue of the Great War would have been fatally different."<sup>1</sup> When a leader can make his men feel that he is one with them he can do anything with them. As Donald Hankey writes of 'The Beloved Captain,' "To see him was to catch his point of view, to forget our personal anxieties, and only to think of the company, and the regiment, and honour." He represented to them their ideal unity, their co-operative unity, which had been suggested to them in the first instance by their discipline and developed by subtle processes of emotional contagion.

<sup>1</sup> *The Group Mind*, p. 61.

## IX

### CONCLUSION

THE Great War has been a tremendous educative experience, but especially so in the case of those who gained it in the Army at the Front. An experience, however, in order to be truly educative must not only receive its meaning from the excitation of innate dispositions: it can be of value for character only in so far as the dispositions aroused are co-ordinated to the whole personality. And for this reason the quality of the education supplied by the war—whether it was beneficial or the reverse—will depend both upon the nature of the dispositions aroused and, more especially, upon the degree to which they were organised within the mind. There can be no doubt whatever that the character of many men was profoundly modified, and in some cases radically altered, by their war experiences. This was particularly so in the case of the younger men. On their return to civilian life many of them proved unable to react to its conditions in their former manner. Some were utterly unable to settle down to their former mode of life, or to continue their preparation for some profession which had been laid aside at the outbreak of war. Some returned to the Army: some emigrated under

promptings which were not always of an economic character. Professor Sir Henry Jones tells us that the formation of character is "a process by which the outer world is formed anew within the individual's mind and will, or by which the individual forms himself through taking the world into himself as his own content."<sup>1</sup> During four years of war, men who had not got beyond the stage of 'trial and error,' men whose character was still in process of formation, were placed in an environment consisting of discomfort and danger on the physical side, a constant temptation to degradation on the spiritual side, and an organised army group upon the social side. According to the presence or absence of certain dispositions, these facts of environment tended to affect a man's character. He might be able to suppress some of these dispositions through the existence of sentiments already organised within his mental structure, or by the organisation of new sentiments. Granting the presence of such dispositions, however, and the failure to suppress them, a man would carry his environment around with him: he could not escape from it: it was a part of his character. In the brutal circumstances of war he would become callous at the sight of pain and death: he would trample unmoved upon the dead bodies of comrade and enemy alike: he would denude the dead of clothing and possessions without a qualm. Those upon whom war had this effect carried such a character home with them. May we not find in its operation one explanation of the crimes of violence and the

<sup>1</sup> "The Working Faith of a Social Reformer," *Hibbert Journal*, vol. iv, No. 2, p. 309.

reduced value of human life which characterises the days in which we live?

Another element which entered into the character of some men came from the economic environment of the Army, and may furnish an explanation of the reluctance to go back to work which they displayed. In the Army men had everything provided for them, clothing, shelter, and food. As a rule they had not to take thought for the provision of these things, and even had they done so, it would have made little difference to the result: even when rations were scarce they knew that the fact was probably due to the exigencies of the situation, and that nothing could be done by them to remedy such a state of things. In his life as a civilian a man's work and his bodily craving for food and shelter were intimately associated in his mind. As a rule a man works because he has to. He is under economic compulsion. If he is out of work, his bodily cravings prompt him to look for employment: if he is insufficiently paid, the same cravings direct him to take such steps as will improve the situation. Men in the Army were also compelled to work, and it was very hard and disagreeable work, but it was a different kind of compulsion. Within their minds there was no area of association between their work and provision for bodily need. They accepted such comforts and bodily satisfactions as they received without associating them with the idea of reward for work performed. A life of such a kind is no fit training for men who will subsequently have to work under the conditions of the modern economic State. Even a cat will cease to hunt mice if it can catch birds more easily, and it will hunt for neither

if it is given food at regular intervals. A man's sentiment for the Army as a whole had associated within it an emotion of confidence with regard to the supply of his necessities of life, and inasmuch as the idea of any object in organised association with an emotional system is part of a man's permanent mental structure, it is also an element in his character. Of course, other mental structures are also elements in his character, but in so far as the impulses within them are unorganised they are only aroused to activity in response to specific changes in outward circumstances: but here the economic environment of the Army enters into character. It is always present, and in permanent association with it are strong affective-conative dispositions. A man thus brought the economic environment of the Army back into civil life in his character, and the two environments came into conflict, with consequent unrest. Even had there been work for all to do it is unlikely that all would have been ready for absorption into the economic life of the country immediately after their demobilisation. It was, at any rate, the general thing to find, in the days immediately following the war, that men expected the country for which they had fought to provide for them, whether they entered into its economic life or not.

In the account which has been attempted in this book of the relationship between war experiences and psychological theory, considerable emphasis has been laid upon the operation of the sentiments in supplying motives for behaviour. We have seen the manner in which a sentiment was able to secure action which the operation of some unorganised

impulse was tending to make impossible. We have seen, too, how the sentiments became further organised into greater unities by the presence of a predominant sentiment, such as the sentiment of self-regard, either in its simple form or in its elaboration by extension to some object with which the self was identified. It was the operation of such a sentiment which raised discipline from the almost mechanical level at which it would otherwise have remained. Mere unquestioning obedience will never make a first-class soldier. Instance the bitter words of Stephen Graham: "To be struck, to be threatened, to be called indecent names, to be drilled by yourself in front of a squad in order to make a fool of you, to be commanded to do a tiring exercise and to continue doing it whilst the rest of the squad does something else: to have your ear spat into, to be marched across parade ground under escort, to be falsely accused before an officer and silenced when you try to speak in self-defence—all these things take down your pride, make you feel small, and in some ways fit you to accept the rôle of cannon-fodder on the battleground."<sup>1</sup> Such methods will probably be most effective in producing a perfect mechanical obedience, but they are valueless for the development of character. It was by self-discipline, by the operation of a sentiment of self-control, that the individual soldier reached the highest grade. Very few men, I believe, reached that grade, and so far as discipline is concerned I do not think that many men carried it over into civilian life as a controlling force. We noticed, however, that in promoting the sentiment

<sup>1</sup> *A Private in the Guards*, p. 58.

of mutual trust and co-operative unity, discipline had a considerable effect in promoting the development of a group spirit. We saw in the previous section that the army group—the Army as a whole, but more particularly some smaller group or groups with which a man was intimately associated—came to be regarded as a co-operative unity in which each man contributed his part towards the furtherance of a common end. Thus a sentiment came to be formed not only around the idea of the group as a whole, but around the idea of the relationship of the individual men to one another. This sentiment of co-operation—the ‘team spirit,’ the ‘spirit of comradeship’—has been brought back into civilian life. It has, however, acted in a peculiar way in some cases. In the Army men had been taught to suppress their self-assertive impulses, which were out of harmony with this spirit of co-operation. They returned to civil life to find that co-operation, instead of being the main element in their social environment, was scarcely operative. It is, of course, true that in every community which does not plunge headlong into anarchy there is bound to be a certain amount of co-operation for common ends. But many of the men who had spent several years in the Army ruled by a sentiment of comradeship, could see nothing on their return to civil life except narrow class interests, and still more narrow personal interests. They tried to fit the character which they had drawn from their army environment into the environment of civil life, and did not succeed in effecting such a harmony. In many cases, therefore, there has been a swing back from co-operation to self-assertion. During the war there was in



process of formation a sentiment of hostility to the mere civilian among those who bore arms—a Prussian spirit, as it has been called. It became more operative in the days which followed the war, when the self-assertive elements which had been so rigorously repressed on active service began to reassert themselves, and when the 'team spirit' which might have held them in subjection could find no outlet in the direction of the civil environment. Probably because of its former repression this impulse of self-assertion has operated in many cases with all the greater violence. In some cases it has even become a component within a sentiment of co-operation, and has driven men into the ranks of the political communists, for there is no individualist like the thoroughgoing communist, and there is no theory of the State which so much demands co-operation as this theory does.

The co-operative sentiment still survives among men who have served in the Army during the Great War, and shows itself in those associations which emphasise the idea of comradeship. The principles of mutual co-operation are clearly seen, for example, in the fundamental rule of the British Legion of Ex-Servicemen: "That the Legion shall exist to perpetuate in the civil life of the Empire and of the world the principles for which we have fought: . . . to promote unity among all classes: to make right the master of might: to secure peace and goodwill on earth: to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy: and to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual service and helpfulness." Others may have forgotten the lesson

which was taught by the existence within the nation of a co-operative unity during the war years, but those who received their training in the hard school of war itself have not forgotten. The boasted unity which is reached in national life through the pressure of war can only be maintained by mutual co-operation for a common end, and it can no longer be maintained when class and private interests usurp the place of ends that are common to all. As Professor MacIver says, "Where war is the chief stimulus to solidarity, its necessary intervals are full of danger. It is the warrior who, away from war, becomes luxurious and degenerate, it is the war-stained people which, when it ceases to fight, falls into decadence, simply because the more persistent stimuli involved in constructive effort cannot so effectively appeal to these."<sup>1</sup> War is undoubtedly destructive, but, I think, we may find constructive elements in it, too. In so far as it reacts upon the mind so as to promote a sentiment of co-operation for common ends it is constructive.

We have seen during the war years how men were swept into the Army through the operation of the crudest, most irrational impulses, and how through discipline they have learned to co-operate with one another in a spirit of mutual trust. But even in co-operation the crude impulse of self-regard is to be found, for we are doing in relation to others what we would that they should do in relation to us, and are thereby making self-regard the form of our conduct. On the whole, the war has shown the operation of impulsive tendencies as the prime motives of action. The operation of

<sup>1</sup> *Community*, p. 351.

the sentiments may, however, be seen as a kind of half-way house in the mind's progress towards the full intellectual control of behaviour. It is, as Mr. Shand points out, by means of the sentiments that we come to form for ourselves ends other than the purely biological ends of the instincts. Such further ends we discovered in various extensions of self-regard to objects other than the self. It has been taught by Dr. McDougall that primitive impulse—or, as he calls it, 'instinct'—and its modification through experience lie at the foundation of all action. I do not think that there has been anything in war experiences to conflict with this view. Even when we were considering acts of the highest courage in which the will was in actual control of the situation, we did not find that will consists of some absolutely new element which differed in essence from ordinary impulse. The act of will issues from the complete self, and in doing so merely expresses the interests and impulsive tendencies which form our character.

The war has shown very little of reason as the fundamental basis of human activity. It has shown that when reasoning powers were brought into operation it was solely in the interests of some affective-conative disposition, and for the purpose of adapting means to ends which had already been presented to the mind by non-rational causes. It has shown that intellect may ride impulse, but that its rôle is to guide and never to inspire a train of action. It brings no new flood of energy to reinforce activity: it simply directs or re-directs the energy which is already operating within some impulsive disposition, and enables it to express itself more

freely. The only organised intellectual control which the Army recognised was that furnished by the Higher Command, and by those subordinate commanders to whom it delegated some of its functions. It was exercised, however, solely for the direction of impulses which were already present in each man, and without which its plans would simply have been inoperative. In the Army on active service at the Front, impulse was therefore the motive of all activity, raw impulse and impulse modified and controlled by the plans of the Commander-in-Chief and his staff, or through the operation of those sentiments which were themselves based on impulse. As it was at Balaclava, so was it in France and Flanders, in Palestine and Mesopotamia, for the men engaged in operations :

Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do or die.

## INDEX

- Action in the line of greatest resistance, 131
- Adler, 142
- 'All-or-none' principle, 83
- Anger, 83 ff.  
and fear, relationship between, 89-91  
control of, 84
- 'Anoetic sentence,' 118
- Anxiety, 74, 119
- 'Anxiety states,' 23, 24, 148-150, 152
- Army organisation, 161
- Army unity, 161, 162  
nature of, 168
- 'Association fibres,' 31
- Association of ideas, 135
- Attention, 51, 130
- Baldwin, J. M., 54
- Barker, E., 39
- Behaviour, 25-28
- Bosanquet, 51
- 'Brain patterns,' 30
- Brown, Dr. Wm., 21, 143-146, 152
- Collapse, 61-62
- Collective consciousness, 38, 40
- Collective life, basal principles of, 37, 100
- Collective will, 173-174
- Communism, 185
- Community, 56, 160
- 'Complex,' 21, 22, 142
- Concealment, 45, 62, 66, 68
- Contagious emotion, 76
- Conway, Sir Martin, 44, 47, 77, 161, 175, 176
- Co-operation, 163, 166, 185
- Courage, 115-132, 168  
animal, 116  
and sentiment, 123-126, 128, 173  
and will, 127
- Credulity, 138
- Culpin, Dr. Millais, 23, 142, 150, 151, 152
- Curiosity, 47, 50, 63, 71-72
- Desire—  
emotions of, 121  
obstruction of, 121-122
- Desire to kill, 49
- Despair, 45, 120  
courage of, 117
- Difficult duty, 80
- Discipline, 161-163, 167, 183,
- 'Displacement of affect,' 85
- Disposition, 29 ff., 53
- Dissociation, 21, 141, 147
- Élan vital*, 23, 36
- Emotion—  
function of, 32, 86  
James-Lange theory of, 70  
primary, McDougall's theory of, 67

## 190 A PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT

Emotion (*continued*)—

repression of, 19-20, 22

sensory character of, 72

Espinas, 38

*Esprit de corps*, 41, 96

'Extrovert,' the, 149, 153

Fatalism, 99, 100, 102

Fear, 45, 60 ff., 101, 145

Feeling-tone, 32, 70, 122

Flight, 45, 62-65, 76

Freud, 22, 23, 150

Ginsberg, M., 28, 30

Gregarious instinct, 47-48, 56  
76, 81

Groos, Karl, 33

Group consciousness—

development of, 161-165

multiple, 170

Group mind, the, 37, 166, 168,  
169

theories of, 38-40

Group unity, prime cause of,  
160-161

Graham, Stephen, 139, 183

Hobhouse, L. T., 35

Hope, 119, 120

Hysteria, 22, 140-141, 148, 149

Idea, 106

Imitation, 37, 162, 166

Immobility, 64

Impulse, fundamental law of,  
122

Instinct, 32, 85

consciousness in relation to, 33  
modification of, 34, 35, 36, 65,  
67-69

suppression of, 19-20, 139,  
142, 154, 185

Interest, 51, 135

loss of, 96, 152

'Introvert,' the, 149, 151-153

James, William, 33, 80, 130,  
136

Janet, Pierre, 22, 148

Jung, C. G., 23, 133, 134, 148

Leaders—

importance of, 77, 174

representative character of,  
175, 177

trust in, 176, 178

types of, 175

Le Bon, G., 52, 156, 175

Libido, 23, 24, 142

Loneliness, 56, 76

McDougall, Dr. Wm., 25, 28, 29,  
33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 40, 56, 67,  
77, 85, 98, 101, 105, 119,  
121, 122, 129, 150, 163

Maciver, R. M., 41, 159, 166,  
186

Manipulative activity, 63, 75,  
79, 90

Mental process and mental con-  
tent, 39

Neurasthenia, 148, 151

*Noblesse oblige*, 127, 128

Panic, 78

Psychasthenia, 148, 152

Psychology, definitions of, 24-25

Psychological types, 149

Public opinion, effect of, 58

Pugnacity, 48, 82-94

Race and neurotic tendency,  
150-154

Reflex action, 30, 32, 33

Regression, 24

Religion, 99-103

Rivers, Dr. W. H. R., 61, 63, 65,  
83, 84, 85, 91, 92

Rumour, 138

- Secondary automatic action, 137
- Self-assertion, 20, 47, 50, 57, 85-91, 129, 139, 154, 162, 167, 184
- Self-discipline, 183
- Self-feeling—
  - negative and fear, 73, 75, 102
  - negative and wonder, 100
  - positive, 86
- Self-interest, 54 ff.
- Self-respect, 44, 81, 96, 104, 106, 125, 131, 140
- Sentiment—
  - control of conduct by, 104, 105, 108, 112, 123, 173
  - expressed in song, 97-99
  - extension of the self-regarding, 41, 46, 104, 128, 140, 165, 188
  - nature of, 98, 107
  - self-regarding, 53, 104, 111, 112
- Sense of the dramatic, 113
- Sex in war, 46, 48-49
- Share, 119, 121, 187
- 'Shell shock,' 21, 140, 143, 144, 152
- Sound, effect of, 70
- 'Spirit of the bayonet,' 49, 83, 87, 116
- Suggestibility, 57-59
- Suggestion, 37, 166
- Sympathy, 37, 166
- Sympathetic induction of emotion, law of, 77
- Tender emotion, 48, 97, 103
- Territorial system, 169
- Tradition, 41, 168
- Trust, 163
- Unknown, fear of, 71 ff., 75
- Unconscious mind, the, 134 ff.
  - contents of, 134, 136, 149
  - function of, 138
- Unconscious thought processes, 145
- War spirit in town and country, 57-58
- Watson, J. B., 26-27
- Will—
  - essential achievement of the, 80
  - nature of the, 54, 131-132
- 'Will-of-all,' 174
- Westermarck, 90



















